

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

CHAPTER V.

MR. VANSTONE'S inquiries into the proposed theatrical entertainment at Evergreen Lodge were answered by a narrative of dramatic disasters; of which Miss Marrable impersonated the innocent cause, and in which her father and mother played the parts of chief victims.

Miss Marrable was that hardest of all born tyrants—an only child. She had never granted a constitutional privilege to her oppressed father and mother, since the time when she cut her first tooth. Her seventeenth birthday was now near at hand; she had decided on celebrating it by acting a play; had issued her orders accordingly; and had been obeyed by her docile parents as implicitly as usual. Mrs. Marrable gave up the drawing-room to be laid waste for a stage and a theatre. Mr. Marrable secured the services of a respectable professional person to drill the young ladies and gentlemen, and to accept all the other responsibilities, incidental to creating a dramatic world out of a domestic chaos. Having further accustomed themselves to the breaking of furniture and the staining of walls—to thumping, tumbling, hammering, and screaming; to doors always banging, and to footsteps perpetually running up and down stairs—the nominal master and mistress of the house fondly believed that their chief troubles were over. Innocent and fatal delusion! It is one thing, in private society, to set up the stage and choose the play—it is another thing altogether, to find the actors. Hitherto, only the small preliminary annoyances proper to the occasion, had shown themselves at Evergreen Lodge. The sound and serious troubles were all to come.

"The Rivals" having been chosen as the play, Miss Marrable, as a matter of course, appropriated to herself the part of "Lydia Languish." One of her favoured swains next secured "Captain Absolute," and another laid violent hands on "Sir Lucius O'Trigger." These two were followed by an accommodating spinster-relative, who accepted the heavy dramatic responsibility of "Mrs. Malaprop"—and there, the theatrical proceedings came to a pause. Nine more speaking characters were left to be fitted

with representatives; and with that unavoidable necessity the serious troubles began.

All the friends of the family suddenly became unreliable people, for the first time in their lives. After encouraging the idea of the play, they declined the personal sacrifice of acting in it—or, they accepted characters, and then broke down in the effort to study them—or they volunteered to take the parts which they knew were already engaged, and declined the parts which were waiting to be acted—or they were afflicted with weak constitutions, and mischievously fell ill when they were wanted at rehearsal—or they had Puritan relatives in the background, and, after slipping into their parts cheerfully at the week's beginning, oozed out of them penitently, under serious family pressure, at the week's end. Meanwhile, the carpenters hammered and the scenes rose. Miss Marrable, whose temperament was sensitive, became hysterical under the strain of perpetual anxiety; the family doctor declined to answer for the nervous consequences if something was not done. Renewed efforts were made in every direction. Actors and actresses were sought, with a desperate disregard of all considerations of personal fitness. Necessity which knows no law, either in the drama or out of it, accepted a lad of eighteen as the representative of "Sir Antony Absolute;" the stage-manager undertaking to supply the necessary wrinkles from the illimitable resources of theatrical art. A lady whose age was unknown, and whose personal appearance was stout—but whose heart was in the right place—volunteered to act the part of the sentimental "Julia," and brought with her the dramatic qualification of habitually wearing a wig in private life. Thanks to these vigorous measures, the play was at last supplied with representatives—always excepting the two unmanageable characters of "Lucy" the waiting-maid, and "Falkland," Julia's jealous lover. Gentlemen came; saw Julia at rehearsal; observed her stoutness and her wig; omitted to notice that her heart was in the right place; quailed at the prospect, apologised, and retired. Ladies read the part of "Lucy;" remarked that she appeared to great advantage in the first half of the play, and faded out of it altogether in the latter half; objected to pass from the notice of the audience in that manner, when all the rest had a chance of distinguishing themselves to the end; shut up the book, apologised, and retired.

In eight days more the night of performance would arrive; a phalanx of social martyrs two hundred strong, had been convened to witness it; three full rehearsals were absolutely necessary; and two characters in the play were not filled yet. With this lamentable story, and with the humblest apologies for presuming on a slight acquaintance, the Marrables appeared at Combe-Raven, to appeal to the young ladies for a "Lucy," and to the universe for a "Falkland," with the mendicant pertinacity of a family in despair.

This statement of circumstances—addressed to an audience which included a father of Mr. Vanstone's disposition, and a daughter of Magdalen's temperament—produced the result which might have been anticipated from the first.

Either misinterpreting, or disregarding, the ominous silence preserved by his wife and Miss Garth, Mr. Vanstone not only gave Magdalen permission to assist the forlorn dramatic company, but accepted an invitation to witness the performance for Norah and himself. Mrs. Vanstone declined accompanying them on account of her health: and Miss Garth only engaged to make one among the audience, conditionally on not being wanted at home. The "parts" of "Lucy" and "Falkland" (which the distressed family carried about with them everywhere, like incidental maladies) were handed to their representatives on the spot. Frank's faint remonstrances were rejected without a hearing; the days and hours of rehearsal were carefully noted down on the covers of the parts; and the Marrables took their leave, with a perfect explosion of thanks—father, mother, and daughter sowing their expressions of gratitude broadcast, from the drawing-room door to the garden-gates.

As soon as the carriage had driven away, Magdalen presented herself to the general observation under an entirely new aspect.

"If any more visitors call to-day," she said, with the profoundest gravity of look and manner, "I am not at home. This is a far more serious matter than any of you suppose. Go somewhere by yourself, Frank, and read over your part, and don't let your attention wander if you can possibly help it. I shall not be accessible before the evening. If you will come here—with papa's permission—after tea, my views on the subject of Falkland will be at your disposal. Thomas! whatever else the gardener does, he is not to make any floricultural noises under my window. For the rest of the afternoon, I shall be immersed in study—and the quieter the house is, the more obliged I shall feel to everybody."

Before Miss Garth's battery of reproof could open fire, before the first outburst of Mr. Vanstone's hearty laughter could escape his lips, she bowed to them with imperturbable gravity; ascended the house-steps for the first time in her life, at a walk instead of a run; and retired then and there to the bedroom regions. Frank's helpless astonishment at her disappearance, added a new element of absurdity to the scene. He

stood first on one leg and then on the other; rolling and unrolling his part, and looking pitteously in the faces of the friends about him. "I know I can't do it," he said. "May I come in after tea, and hear Magdalen's views? Thank you—I'll look in about eight. Don't tell my father about this acting, please: I should never hear the last of it." Those were the only words he had spirit enough to utter. He drifted away aimlessly in the direction of the shrubbery, with the part hanging open in his hand—the most incapable of Falklands, and the most helpless of mankind.

Frank's departure left the family by themselves, and was the signal accordingly for an attack on Mr. Vanstone's inveterate carelessness in the exercise of his paternal authority.

"What could you possibly be thinking of, Andrew, when you gave your consent?" said Mrs. Vanstone. "Surely my silence was a sufficient warning to you to say No?"

"A mistake, Mr. Vanstone," chimed in Miss Garth. "Made with the best intentions—but a mistake for all that."

"It may be a mistake," said Norah, taking her father's part, as usual. "But I really don't see how papa, or any one else, could have declined, under the circumstances."

"Quite right, my dear," observed Mr. Vanstone. "The circumstances, as you say, were dead against me. Here were these unfortunate people in a scrape on one side; and Magdalen, on the other, mad to act. I couldn't say I had methodistical objections—I've nothing methodistical about me. What other excuse could I make? The Marrables are respectable people, and keep the best company in Clifton. What harm can she get in their house? If you come to prudence and that sort of thing—why shouldn't Magdalen do what Miss Marrable does? There! there! let the poor things act, and amuse themselves. We were their age once—and it's no use making a fuss—and that's all I've got to say about it."

With that characteristic defence of his own conduct, Mr. Vanstone sauntered back to the greenhouse to smoke another cigar.

"I didn't say so to papa," said Norah, taking her mother's arm on the way back to the house, "but the bad result of the acting, in my opinion, will be the familiarity it is sure to encourage between Magdalen and Francis Clare."

"You are prejudiced against Frank, my love," said Mrs. Vanstone.

Norah's soft, secret, hazel eyes sank to the ground: she said no more. Her opinions were unchangeable—but she never disputed with anybody. She had the great failing of a reserved nature—the failing of obstinacy; and the great merit—the merit of silence. "What is your head running on now," thought Miss Garth, casting a sharp look at Norah's dark, downcast face. "You're one of the impenetrable sort. Give me Magdalen, with all her perversities; I can see daylight through her. You're as dark as night."

The hours of the afternoon passed away, and

still Magdalen remained shut up in her own room. No restless footsteps pattered on the stairs; no nimble tongue was heard chattering here, there, and everywhere, from the garret to the kitchen—the house seemed hardly like itself, with the one ever-disturbing element in the family serenity suddenly withdrawn from it. Anxious to witness, with her own eyes, the reality of a transformation in which past experience still inclined her to disbelieve, Miss Garth ascended to Magdalen's room, knocked twice at the door, received no answer, opened it, and looked in.

There sat Magdalen, in an arm-chair before the long looking-glass, with all her hair let down over her shoulders; absorbed in the study of her part; and comfortably arrayed in her morning wrapper, until it was time to dress for dinner. And there behind her sat the lady's-maid, slowly combing out the long heavy locks of her young mistress's hair, with the sleepy resignation of a woman who had been engaged in that employment for some hours past. The sun was shining; and the green shutters outside the window were closed. The dim light fell tenderly on the two quiet seated figures; on the little white bed, with the knots of rose-coloured ribbon which looped up its curtains, and the bright dress for dinner laid ready across it; on the gaily painted bath, with its pure lining of white enamel; on the toilet-table with its sparkling trinkets, its crystal bottles, its silver bell with Cupid for a handle, its litter of little luxuries that adorn the shrine of a woman's bedchamber. The luxurious tranquillity of the scene; the cool fragrance of flowers and perfumes in the atmosphere; the rapt attitude of Magdalen, absorbed over her reading; the monotonous regularity of movement in the maid's hand and arm, as she drew the comb smoothly through and through her mistress's hair—all conveyed the same soothing impression of drowsy delicious quiet. On one side of the door were the broad daylight, and the familiar realities of life. On the other, was the dreamland of Elysian serenity—the sanctuary of unruffled repose.

Miss Garth paused on the threshold, and looked into the room in silence.

Magdalen's curious fancy for having her hair combed at all times and seasons, was among the peculiarities of her character which were notorious to everybody in the house. It was one of her father's favourite jokes, that she reminded him, on such occasions, of a cat having her back stroked, and that he always expected, if the combing were only continued long enough, to hear her *purr*. Extravagant as it may seem, the comparison was not altogether inappropriate. The girl's fervid temperament intensified the essentially feminine pleasure that most women feel in the passage of the comb through their hair, to a luxury of sensation which absorbed her in enjoyment, so serenely self-demonstrative, so drowsily deep, that it did irresistibly suggest a pet cat's enjoyment under a caressing hand. Intimately as Miss Garth was acquainted with this peculiarity in her pupil, she now saw it asserting

itself, for the first time, in association with mental exertion of any kind on Magdalen's part. Feeling, therefore, some curiosity to know how long the combing and the studying had gone on together, she ventured on putting the question, first, to the mistress; and (receiving no answer in that quarter) secondly, to the maid.

"All the afternoon, Miss, off and on," was the weary answer. "Miss Magdalen says it soothes her feelings and clears her mind."

Knowing by experience that interference would be hopeless, under these circumstances, Miss Garth turned sharply and left the room. She smiled when she was outside on the landing. The female mind does occasionally—though not often—project itself into the future. Miss Garth was prophetically pitying Magdalen's unfortunate husband.

Dinner-time presented the fair student to the family eye in the same mentally absorbed aspect. On all ordinary occasions, Magdalen's appetite would have terrified those feeble sentimentalists who affect to ignore the all-important influence which female feeding exerts in the production of female beauty. On this occasion, she refused one dish after another with a resolution which implied the rarest of all modern martyrdoms—gastric martyrdom. "I have conceived the part of Lucy," she observed, with the demurest gravity. "The next difficulty is to make Frank conceive the part of Falkland. I see nothing to laugh at—you would all be serious enough if you had my responsibilities. No, papa—no wine to-day, thank you. I must keep my intelligence clear. Water, Thomas—and a little more jelly, I think, before you take it away."

When Frank presented himself in the evening, ignorant of the first elements of his part, she took him in hand, as a middle-aged schoolmistress might have taken in hand a backward little boy. The few attempts he made to vary the sternly practical nature of the evening's occupation by slipping in compliments sidelong, she put away from her with the contemptuous self-possession of a woman of twice her age. She literally forced him into his part. Her father fell asleep in his chair. Mrs. Vanstone and Miss Garth lost their interest in the proceedings, retired to the farther end of the room, and spoke together in whispers. It grew later and later; and still Magdalen never flinched from her task—still, with equal perseverance, Norah, who had been on the watch all through the evening, kept on the watch to the end. The distrust darkened and darkened on her face as she looked at her sister and Frank; as she saw how close they sat together, devoted to the same interest and working to the same end. The clock on the mantelpiece pointed to half-past eleven, before Lucy the resolute, permitted Falkland the helpless to shut up his task-book for the night. "She's wonderfully clever, isn't she?" said Frank, taking leave of Mr. Vanstone at the hall-door. "I'm to come to-morrow, and hear more of her views—if you have no objection. I shall never do it; don't tell her I said so. As fast as she teaches me one

speech, the other goes out of my head. Discouraging, isn't it? Good night."

The next day but one was the day of the first full rehearsal. On the previous evening Mrs. Vanstone's spirits had been sadly depressed. At a private interview with Miss Garth, she had referred again, of her own accord, to the subject of her letter from London—had spoken self-reproachfully of her weakness in admitting Captain Wragge's impudent claim to a family connexion with her—and had then reverted to the state of her health, and to the doubtful prospect that awaited her in the coming summer, in a tone of despondency which it was very distressing to hear. Anxious to cheer her spirits, Miss Garth had changed the conversation as soon as possible—had referred to the approaching theatrical performance—and had relieved Mrs. Vanstone's mind of all anxiety in that direction, by announcing her intention of accompanying Magdalen to each rehearsal, and of not losing sight of her until she was safely back again in her father's house. Accordingly, when Frank presented himself at Combe-Raven on the eventful morning, there stood Miss Garth, prepared—in the interpolated character of Argus—to accompany Lucy and Falkland to the scene of trial. The railway conveyed the three, in excellent time, to Evergreen Lodge; and at one o'clock the rehearsal began.

CHAPTER VI.

"I HOPE Miss Vanstone knows her part?" whispered Mrs. Marrable, anxiously addressing herself to Miss Garth, in a corner of the theatre.

"If airs and graces make an actress, ma'am, Magdalen's performance will astonish us all." With that reply, Miss Garth took out her work, and seated herself, on guard, in the centre of the pit.

The manager perched himself, book in hand, on a stool close in front of the stage. He was an active little man, of a sweet and cheerful temper; and he gave the signal to begin, with as patient an interest in the proceedings as if they had caused him no trouble in the past, and promised him no difficulty in the future. The two characters which open the comedy of *The Rivals*, "Fag" and the "Coachman," appeared on the scene—looked many sizes too tall for their canvas background, which represented a "Street in Bath"—exhibited the customary inability to manage their own arms, legs, and voices—went out severally at the wrong exits—and expressed their perfect approval of results, so far, by laughing heartily behind the scenes. "Silence, gentlemen, if you please," remonstrated the cheerful manager. "As loud as you like *on* the stage, but the audience mustn't hear you *off* it. Miss Marrable ready? Miss Vanstone ready? Easy there with the 'Street in Bath'; it's going up crooked! Face this way, Miss Marrable; full face, if you please. Miss Vanstone—" He checked himself suddenly. "Curious," he said, under his breath—"she fronts the audience of her own accord!" Lucy opened the scene in these words: "Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half

the town in search of it: I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I haven't been at." The manager started in his chair. "My heart alive! she speaks out without telling!" The dialogue went on. Lucy produced the novels for Miss Lydia Languish's private reading from under her cloak. The manager rose excitedly to his feet. Marvellous! No hurry with the books; no dropping them. She looked at the titles before she announced them to her mistress; she set down "Humphry Clinker" on "The Tears of Sensibility" with a smart little smack which pointed the antithesis. One moment—and she announced Julia's visit; another—and she dropped the brisk waiting-maid's curtsy; a third—and she was off the stage instantly, on the side set down for her in the book. The manager wheeled round in his chair, and looked hard at Miss Garth. "I beg your pardon, ma'am," he said. "Miss Marrable told me, before we began, that this was the young lady's first attempt. It can't be, surely?"

"It is," replied Miss Garth, reflecting the manager's look of amazement on her own face. Was it possible that Magdalen's unintelligible industry in the study of her part, really sprang from a serious interest in her occupation—an interest which implied a natural fitness for it?

The rehearsal went on. The stout lady with the wig (and the excellent heart) personated the sentimental Julia from an inveterately tragic point of view, and used her handkerchief distractedly in the first scene. The spinster-relative felt Mrs. Malaprop's mistakes in language so seriously, and took such extraordinary pains with her blunders, that they sounded more like exercises in elocution than anything else. The unhappy lad who led the forlorn hope of the company, in the person of "Sir Antony Absolute," expressed the age and irascibility of his character by tottering incessantly at the knees, and thumping the stage perpetually with his stick. Slowly and clumsily, with constant interruptions, and interminable mistakes, the first act dragged on, until Lucy appeared again to end it in soliloquy, with the confession of her assumed simplicity and the praise of her own cunning.

Here, the stage artifice of the situation presented difficulties which Magdalen had not encountered in the first scene—and here, her total want of experience led her into more than one palpable mistake. The stage-manager, with an eagerness which he had not shown in the case of any other member of the company, interfered immediately, and set her right. At one point, she was to pause, and take a turn on the stage—she did it. At another, she was to stop, toss her head, and look pertly at the audience—she did it. When she took out the paper to read the list of the presents she had received, could she give it a tap with her finger (Yes)? And lead off with a little laugh (Yes—after twice trying)? Could she read the different items with a sly look at the end of each sentence, straight at the pit (Yes, straight at the pit, and as sly as you please)? The manager's cheerful face beamed

with approval. He tucked the play under his arm, and clapped his hands gaily; the gentlemen, clustered together behind the scenes, followed his example; the ladies looked at each other with dawning doubts whether they had not better have left the new recruit in the retirement of private life. Too deeply absorbed in the business of the stage to heed any of them, Magdalen asked leave to repeat the soliloquy, and make quite sure of her own improvement. She went all through it again, without a mistake, this time, from beginning to end; the manager celebrating her attention to his directions by an outburst of professional approbation, which escaped him in spite of himself. "She can take a hint!" cried the little man, with a hearty smack of his hand on the prompt-book. "She's a born actress, if ever there was one yet!"

"I hope not," said Miss Garth to herself, taking up the work which had dropped into her lap, and looking down at it in some perplexity. Her worst apprehension of results in connexion with the theatrical enterprise, had foreboded levity of conduct with some of the gentlemen—she had not bargained for this. Magdalen, in the capacity of a thoughtless girl, was comparatively easy to deal with. Magdalen, in the character of a born actress, threatened serious future difficulties.

The rehearsal proceeded. Lucy returned to the stage for her scenes in the second act (the last in which she appears) with Sir Lucius and Fag. Here, again, Magdalen's inexperience betrayed itself—and here once more her resolution in attacking and conquering her own mistakes astonished everybody. "Bravo!" cried the gentlemen behind the scenes, as she steadily trampled down one blunder after another. "Ridiculous!" said the ladies, "with such a small part as hers." "Heaven forgive me!" thought Miss Garth, coming round unwillingly to the general opinion. "I almost wish we were Papists, and had a convent to put her in to-morrow." One of Mr. Marrable's servants entered the theatre as that desperate aspiration escaped the governess. She instantly sent the man behind the scenes with a message:—"Miss Vanstone has done her part in the rehearsal: request her to come here, and sit by me." The servant returned with a polite apology:—"Miss Vanstone's kind love, and she begs to be excused—she's prompting Mr. Clare." She prompted him to such purpose that he actually got through his part. The performances of the other gentlemen were obtusely imbecile. Frank was just one degree better—he was modestly incapable; and he gained by comparison. "Thanks to Miss Vanstone," observed the manager, who had heard the prompting. "She pulled him through. We shall be flat enough, at night, when the drop falls on the second act, and the audience have seen the last of her. It's a thousand pities she hasn't got a better part!"

"It's a thousand mercies she's no more to do than she has," muttered Miss Garth, overhearing him. "As things are, the people can't well turn

her head with applause. She's out of the play in the second act—that's one comfort!"

No well-regulated mind ever draws its inferences in a hurry; Miss Garth's mind was well regulated; therefore, logically speaking, Miss Garth ought to have been superior to the weakness of rushing at conclusions. She had committed that error, nevertheless, under present circumstances. In plainer terms, the consoling reflection which had just occurred to her, assumed that the play had by this time survived all its disasters, and entered on its long-deferred career of success. The play had done nothing of the sort. Misfortune and the Marrable family had not parted company yet.

When the rehearsal was over, nobody observed that the stout lady with the wig privately withdrew herself from the company; and when she was afterwards missed from the table of refreshments, which Mr. Marrable's hospitality kept ready spread in a room near the theatre, nobody imagined that there was any serious reason for her absence. It was not till the ladies and gentlemen assembled for the next rehearsal, that the true state of the case was impressed on the minds of the company. At the appointed hour, no Julia appeared. In her stead, Mrs. Marrable portentously approached the stage, with an open letter in her hand. She was naturally a lady of the mildest good breeding: she was mistress of every bland conventionality in the English language—but disasters and dramatic influences combined, threw even this harmless matron off her balance at last. For the first time in her life Mrs. Marrable indulged in vehement gesture, and used strong language. She handed the letter sternly, at arm's length, to her daughter. "My dear," she said, with an aspect of awful composure, "we are under a Curse." Before the amazed dramatic company could petition for an explanation, she turned, and left the room. The manager's professional eye followed her out respectfully—he looked as if he approved of the exit, from a theatrical point of view.

What new misfortune had befallen the play? The last and worst of all misfortunes had assailed it. The stout lady had resigned her part.

Not maliciously. Her heart, which had been in the right place throughout, remained inflexibly in the right place still. Her explanation of the circumstances proved this, if nothing else did. The letter began with a statement:—She had overheard, at the last rehearsal (quite unintentionally), personal remarks of which she was the subject. They might, or might not, have had reference to her—Hair; and her—Figure. She would not distress Mrs. Marrable by repeating them. Neither would she mention names, because it was foreign to her nature to make bad worse. The only course at all consistent with her own self-respect, was to resign her part. She enclosed it accordingly to Mrs. Marrable, with many apologies for her presumption in undertaking a youthful character, at—what a gentleman was pleased to term—her Age; and with what two ladies were rude enough to characterise

as her disadvantages of—Hair, and—Figure. A younger and more attractive representative of Julia, would no doubt be easily found. In the mean time, all persons concerned had her full forgiveness; to which she would only beg leave to add her best and kindest wishes for the success of the play.

In four nights more the play was to be performed. If ever any human enterprise stood in need of good wishes to help it, that enterprise was unquestionably the theatrical entertainment at Evergreen Lodge!

One arm-chair was allowed on the stage; and, into that arm-chair, Miss Marrable sank, preparatory to a fit of hysterics. Magdalen stepped forward at the first convulsion; snatched the letter from Miss Marrable's hand; and stopped the threatened catastrophe.

"She's an ugly, bald-headed, malicious, middle-aged wretch," said Magdalen, tearing the letter into fragments, and tossing them over the heads of the company. "But I can tell her one thing—she shan't spoil the play. I'll act Julia."

"Bravo!" cried the chorus of gentlemen—the anonymous gentleman who had helped to do the mischief (otherwise Mr. Francis Clare) loudest of all.

"If you want the truth, I don't shrink from owning it," continued Magdalen. "I'm one of the ladies she means. I said she had a head like a mop, and a waist like a bolster. So she has."

"I am the other lady," added the spinster-relative. "But I only said she was too stout for the part."

"I am the gentleman," chimed in Frank, stimulated by the force of example. "I said nothing—I only agreed with the ladies."

Here Miss Garth seized her opportunity, and addressed the stage loudly from the pit.

"Stop! stop!" she said. "You can't settle the difficulty in that way. If Magdalen plays Julia who is to play Lucy?"

Miss Marrable sank back in the arm-chair, and gave way to the second convulsion.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Magdalen; "the thing's simple enough. I'll act Julia and Lucy both together."

The manager was consulted on the spot. Suppressing Lucy's first entrance, and turning the short dialogue about the novels into a soliloquy for Lydia Languish, appeared to be the only changes of importance necessary to the accomplishment of Magdalen's project. Lucy's two telling scenes at the end of the first and second acts, were sufficiently removed from the scenes in which Julia appeared, to give time for the necessary transformations in dress. Even Miss Garth, though she tried hard to find them, could put no fresh obstacles in the way. The question was settled in five minutes, and the rehearsal went on; Magdalen learning Julia's stage situations with the book in her hand, and announcing afterwards, on the journey home, that she proposed sitting up all night to study the new part. Frank thereupon expressed his fears that she

would have no time left to help him through his theatrical difficulties. She tapped him on the shoulder coquettishly with her part. "You foolish fellow, how am I to do without you? You're Julia's jealous lover; you're always making Julia cry. Come to-night, and make me cry at tea-time. You haven't got a venomous old woman in a wig to act with now. It's *my* heart you're to break—and of course I shall teach you how to do it."

The four days' interval passed busily in perpetual rehearsals, public and private. The night of performance arrived; the guests assembled; the great dramatic experiment stood on its trial. Magdalen had made the most of her opportunities: she had learnt all that the manager could teach her in the time. Miss Garth left her when the overture began, sitting apart in a corner behind the scenes, serious and silent, with her smelling-bottle in one hand, and her book in the other, resolutely training herself for the coming ordeal, to the very last.

The play began, with all the proper accompaniments of a theatrical performance in private life; with a crowded audience, an African temperature, a bursting of heated lamp-glasses, and a difficulty in drawing up the curtain. "Fag" and "the Coachman," who opened the scene, took leave of their memories as soon as they stepped on the stage; left half their dialogue unspoken; came to a dead pause; were audibly entreated by the invisible manager to "come off;" and went off accordingly, in every respect sadder and wiser men than when they went on. The next scene disclosed Miss Marrable as "Lydia Languish," gracefully seated, very pretty, beautifully dressed, accurately mistress of the smallest words in her part; possessed, in short, of every personal resource—except her voice. The ladies admired, the gentlemen applauded. Nobody heard anything, but the words "Speak up, Miss," whispered by the same voice which had already entreated Fag and the Coachman to "come off." A responsive titter rose among the younger spectators; checked immediately by magnanimous applause. The temperature of the audience was rising to Blood Heat—but the national sense of fair play was not boiled out of them yet.

In the midst of the demonstration, Magdalen quietly made her first entrance, as "Julia." She was dressed very plainly in dark colours, and wore her own hair; all stage adjuncts and alterations (excepting the slightest possible touch of rouge on her cheeks) having been kept in reserve, to disguise her the more effectually in her second part. The grace and simplicity of her costume, the steady self-possession with which she looked out over the eager rows of faces before her, raised a low hum of approval and expectation. She spoke—after suppressing a momentary tremor—with a quiet distinctness of utterance which reached all ears, and which at once confirmed the favourable impression that her appearance had produced. The one member of the audience who looked at her

and listened to her coldly, was her elder sister. Before the actress of the evening had been five minutes on the stage, Norah detected, to her own indescribable astonishment, that Magdalen had audaciously individualised the feeble amiability of "Julia's" character, by seizing no less a person than herself as the model to act it by. She saw all her own little formal peculiarities of manner and movement, unblushingly reproduced—and even the very tone of her voice so accurately mimicked from time to time, that the accents startled her as if she was speaking herself, with an echo on the stage. The effect of this cool appropriation of Norah's identity to theatrical purposes, on the audience—who only saw results—asserted itself in a storm of applause on Magdalen's exit. She had won two incontestable triumphs in her first scene. By a dexterous piece of mimicry, she had made a living reality of one of the most insipid characters in the English drama; and she had roused to enthusiasm an audience of two hundred exiles from the blessings of ventilation, all simmering together in their own animal heat. Under the circumstances, where is the actress by profession who could have done much more?

But the event of the evening was still to come. Magdalen's disguised reappearance at the end of the act, in the character of "Lucy"—with false hair and false eyebrows, with a bright-red complexion and patches on her cheeks, with the gayest colours flaunting in her dress, and the shrillest vivacity of voice and manner—fairly staggered the audience. They looked down at their programmes, in which the representative of Lucy figured under an assumed name; looked up again at the stage; penetrated the disguise; and vented their astonishment in another round of applause, louder and heartier even than the last. Norah herself could not deny this time, that the tribute of approbation had been well deserved. There, forcing its way steadily through all the faults of inexperience—there, plainly visible to the dulllest of the spectators, was the rare faculty of dramatic impersonation, expressing itself, in every look and action of this girl of eighteen, who now stood on a stage for the first time in her life. Failing in many minor requisites of the double task which she had undertaken, she succeeded in the one important necessity of keeping the main distinctions of the two characters thoroughly apart. Everybody felt that the difficulty lay here—everybody saw the difficulty conquered—everybody echoed the manager's enthusiasm at rehearsal, which had hailed her as a born actress.

When the drop-scene descended for the first time, Magdalen had concentrated in herself the whole interest and attraction of the play. The audience politely applauded Miss Marryable, as became the guests assembled in her father's house; and good humouredly encouraged the remainder of the company, to help them through a task for which they were all, more or less, palpably unfit. But, as the play proceeded, nothing roused them to any genuine expression of interest when Magdalen was absent from the

scene. There was no disguising it; Miss Marryable and her bosom friends had been all hopelessly cast in the shade, by the new recruit whom they had summoned to assist them, in the capacity of forlorn hope. And this on Miss Marryable's own birthday! and this in her father's house! and this after the unutterable sacrifices of six weeks past! Of all the domestic disasters which the thankless theatrical enterprise had inflicted on the Marryable family, the crowning misfortune was now consummated by Magdalen's success.

Leaving Mr. Vanstone and Norah, on the conclusion of the play, among the guests in the supper-room, Miss Garth went behind the scenes; ostensibly anxious to see if she could be of any use; really bent on ascertaining whether Magdalen's head had been turned by the triumphs of the evening. It would not have surprised Miss Garth if she had discovered her pupil in the act of making terms with the manager for her forthcoming appearance in a public theatre. As events really turned out, she found Magdalen on the stage, receiving, with gracious smiles, a card which the manager presented to her with a professional bow. Noticing Miss Garth's mute look of inquiry, the civil little man hastened to explain that the card was his own, and that he was merely asking the favour of Miss Vanstone's recommendation at any future opportunity.

"This is not the last time the young lady will be concerned in private theatricals, I'll answer for it," said the manager. "And if a superintendent is wanted on the next occasion, she has kindly promised to say a good word for me. I am always to be heard of, Miss, at that address." Saying those words, he bowed again, and discreetly disappeared.

Vague suspicions beset the mind of Miss Garth, and urged her to insist on looking at the card. No more harmless morsel of pasteboard was ever passed from one hand to another. The card contained nothing but the manager's name, and, under it, the name and address of a theatrical agent in London.

"It is not worth the trouble of keeping," said Miss Garth.

Magdalen caught her hand, before she could throw the card away—possessed herself of it the next instant—and put it in her pocket.

"I promised to recommend him," she said—"and that's one reason for keeping his card. If it does nothing else, it will remind me of the happiest evening of my life—and that's another. Come!" she cried, throwing her arms round Miss Garth with a feverish gaiety—"congratulate me on my success!"

"I will congratulate you when you have got over it," said Miss Garth.

In half an hour more, Magdalen had changed her dress; had joined the guests; and had soared into an atmosphere of congratulation, high above the reach of any controlling influence that Miss Garth could exercise. Frank, dilatory in all his proceedings, was the last of the dramatic com-

pany who left the precincts of the stage. He made no attempt to join Magdalen in the supper-room—but he was ready in the hall, with her cloak, when the carriages were called and the party broke up.

"Oh, Frank!" she said, looking round at him, as he put the cloak on her shoulders, "I am so sorry it's all over! Come, to-morrow morning, and let's talk about it by ourselves."

"In the shrubbery at ten?" asked Frank, in a whisper.

She drew up the hood of her cloak, and nodded to him gaily. Miss Garth, standing near, noticed the looks that passed between them, though the disturbance made by the parting guests prevented her from hearing the words. There was a soft, underlying tenderness in Magdalen's assumed gaiety of manner—there was a sudden thoughtfulness in her face, a confidential readiness in her hand, as she took Frank's arm and went out to the carriage. What did it mean? Had her passing interest in him, as her stage-pupil, treacherously sown the seeds of any deeper interest in him, as a man? Had the idle theatrical scheme, now that it was all over, graver results to answer for than a mischievous waste of time?

The lines on Miss Garth's face deepened and hardened: she stood lost among the fluttering crowd around her. Norah's warning words, addressed to Mrs. Vanstone in the garden, recurred to her memory—and now, for the first time, the idea dawned on her that Norah had seen consequences in their true light.

HOW CLUBS TREAT LADIES IN RUSSIA.

FOR some reason or other—perhaps not very difficult to find out, if this were the time and place to look for it—clubs are coming into fashion very much, just now, in Russia. In the Russian town where the writer lives, though a provincial city, there are four, all in thriving circumstances. Two of the four have been formed within the last few months, and more are talked of. Indeed, hotel-keepers and speculators find them a very profitable enterprise. Party spirit unfortunately runs rather too high in these clubs, and public opinion, long and sternly repressed during the late reign, having grown feverish and restless in its reaction, finds rather too ready a vent there. Clubs also, being comparatively a recent adoption as popular institutions for the middle classes in Russia, are not conducted on quite the right principle. They are made a vehicle for venting political animosity and private grudges. Black-balling has degenerated into a science, and is looked upon as good sport among us. No matter who may be proposed, we black-ball him for our amusement. Consequence is, of course, a row. Aggrieved party, who has been waiting outside the door, to rush in immediately after his election, jumps into his *wheelbarrow* (Russian *droschky*), and

goes bumping away, to shout out his wrongs all over the town, and find out who is his enemy. Enemy being found out, is waylaid and talked to in a very shrill voice, within one inch of his beard, until he surrenders at discretion. All parties then embrace. The candidate is put up again and elected, there being usually no cause whatever why he should not have been elected at first, except a desire on the part of our community that his perplexity and astonishment at his rejection should afford pleasurable excitement. But we are really a kind and good-humoured race. We never seriously mean to injure anybody, but we must have our talk about everybody. This is our peculiarity. We consider it our right and privilege as enlightened citizens, and we could not think of foregoing it on any account whatever. It is not practically a very vicious sentiment; for where other people would come to blows in such discussions, we come to kisses; and so many bottles of champagne are drunk in the making up of our quarrels, that I sometimes suspect they must be fomented by energetic emissaries of wine-merchants. An original-minded man in that line of business could hardly have devised a scheme at once more shrewd and more benevolent for furthering his own interests and furnishing the general public with a never-failing enjoyment. The only wonder to me, a simple man, is where the money comes from to buy the champagne. But persons who affect to know this country well, assert that the state of society among us is very much like what it was in England at the time of Tom Jones.

A gallant youth, with a slim figure and jingling spurs, is likely enough to have other resources besides his pay as a lieutenant in a cavalry regiment. Some of those smart young merchants who are so impressively civil to that haughty official, might explain to you, if they would, how it is that with a salary of nothing a year he contrives to live so jollily. And then we all breathe in such a delightful atmosphere of debts and borrowing! Everybody is in debt to everybody, and nobody pays anybody. We are ingenuous laughing debtors—not solemn gloomy debtors, as in Britain. We consider debts a capital joke. We make merry over them. We are Counts Fathom and Captains Borrowell. For instance, one of us was in debt to a tavern-keeper. Tavern-keeper did not look upon the debt in the same cheerful manner as debtor. There was a difference of opinion between them on the subject, until the debtor undertook to enlighten tavern-keeper as to the manner in which we deal with such things. Fact was, Creditor, taking a melancholy view of debts in general and of this debt in particular, determined to have his money, and became quite unbearable and absurd. Debtor was an aide-de-camp on the staff of a very great man indeed. Creditor resolved to call on the very great man indeed, and angrily told Debtor he would do so. Debtor smilingly expressed a hope that he would keep his word, and determined to be in attendance at the time. Creditor indignantly

orders out his wheelbarrow, and flames away to tell his wrongs and grievance to very great man indeed. Finds his debtor in the ante-room with the brightest of spurs and longest of aiguillets; scowls at him in unrelenting manner, and demands to see his master. Debtor, in the most good-humoured way in the world, goes jingling off to announce Creditor, and returns with a radiant smile to say that very great man indeed will receive him at once. Creditor's heart begins to soften—his victim is so polite; but then he is so impudent, that good nature and justice have a struggle in his breast as to whether he shall not forgive the gay young fellow after all. The gay young fellow saves him all trouble in deciding this question, by laying his hand with delightful and winning cordiality on mine host's shoulder, and conducting him at once, half-repenting of his design, into the great man's presence.

"This man, your excellency," says the gallant youngster, turning round with a beaming face and protecting smile to his abashed creditor: "this man is a tavern-keeper, and has come, as I mentioned to your excellency yesterday that he said he would, to implore in the humblest and most respectful manner that your excellency and staff will do him the infinite honour of taking a breakfast at his house, which he has prepared with great care and expense in order that your patronage, if you grant his prayer, may give vogue and fashion by your gracious visit to his establishment. He has entreated me to intercede for him, and, though awe and respect have hitherto withheld me, I now do so with all my heart, and beg your excellency to make him rich and happy by your favour and countenance."

Very great man rises; he is so tall that he never seems to have done rising. No man on earth is so dignified as a very great man in Russia, and, of all Russian great men this very great man indeed is the most dignified. With a slight wave of the hand, and a sweet rare smile, he utters a word of acceptance, and is immediately lost among his papers again. Debtor hustles his gasping and astonished Creditor out of the room, and the scene closes: Creditor secretly rejoicing to have got out of the scrape so well. This perhaps explains how we come to drink so much champagne in making up our quarrels. We don't pay for it; but then the merchant does not suffer. Suppose he is bankrupt every now and then? A well-managed bankruptcy is not such a bad affair in Russia. We don't turn our backs upon the bankrupt, and, if he should ever be really poor, can't he borrow as we do? All the charity and kindness of our nature will wake up for him then. There is no such thing as unpitied distress or hard-heartedness in Russia.

Our clubs, although made up of such amusing elements, have hitherto been rather dull. Ladies, unaccustomed to the discipline, have complained a good deal of being left at home alone during the long evenings; and we men being allowed more liberty than is good for us, have given our minds a great deal too much to gambling. It is dis-

treassing to think of the new bonnets and dresses we have lost at cards, while left to our own silly devices. We have therefore hit upon an improvement; our wives and daughters, sisters, and especially maiden aunts, thereto consenting, we have arranged to take those ladies to our clubs with us. Notably every Wednesday, or some other day in the week set apart for the purpose, our clubs call in fiddlers and fifes, the violoncello and the big bassoon, and we have a dance. Here, however, at first there was a slight difficulty. How would it appear to Mrs. Grundy if those who were known to have an income of nothing a year, brought their wives in lace and jewels to the club? This might have consequences which would be troublesome. The spirit of inquiry in high quarters, willing enough to shut its eyes as long as possible, might have them reluctantly forced open. We therefore agreed to come in our usual household dresses, both dames and cavaliers, and to be content with merely amusing ourselves as they do at those charming Ducasses in the north of France. We consider the club as our own house kept up by general subscription, and determine to be at ease in it.

These club balls have become quite the rage in Russia. Our highest aristocracy, who have much of the spirit that distinguished the gay nobles who flocked to the *Œil de Bœuf* at the courts of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Louises of France, come to them in crowds, and patronise them, as they do all things democratic, with rather too eager and ostentatious a patronage. Their highnesses and their excellencies jig it bravely with the shopboy and the huckster; and the coronet and the working cap sit down together at supper. Instead of the sleepy waiters we used to see dozing about and nursing their stomachs in the entrance-hall, we have a company of brisk pages with quicksilver in their shoes; at night, as the quiet man turns drowsily in his bed between his first and second sleep during the small hours, clear and loud come the songs and laughter of our club roysterers sledging homeward. Such a gay city as we have made of this city of ours never was seen before. All the world seems pleasure mad; for pleasure for the first time has been placed within the reach of all.

Supposing a few enterprising committees were to try and make some of our London clubs rather more popular among the ladies, in this way, might it not be a pleasant feature in the London season? Why should not our woman-kind take part in our pleasures and luxuries, as well as in the humdrum and worry of our lives? Some of our club drawing-rooms would be marvellously improved by the gay sweet voices and pleasant faces of our daughters, and our social life would be all the better for a more frequent and habitual mingling of young men and women. Many a good young fellow drifts into bad habits, cigars, grog, billiards, and worse, for the want of female society of his own rank. Many a fair girl fades away into old maidenhood, because she is obliged by the res

angusta domi to blush unseen. There are few respectable public places of assembly in London, and private party giving is such an expensive affair, that prudent people, even among the higher of the middle classes, seldom venture to indulge in it. Now, club balls need cost nothing but the light and music, which, divided among many members, would amount to scarcely five shillings a year additional on the subscriptions of each member. Full-dress must be rigidly prohibited. I venture to predict that in a very short time a marked improvement would be visible in the morals, manners, and habits of our young men, with no small advantage to the happiness of many a house now too dull and cheerless.

THE STATUTE-BOOK.

THE forty quarto volumes of dry and solid law which compose what is popularly called The Statute-book, present at a first glance few points of attraction to the general reader. However, should we not be deterred by superficial impediments, and should we be induced to dive beneath a very unpromising surface, we shall, especially among the earlier statutes, meet with many valuable illustrations of history, and many choice little pictures of the social life of our ancestors.

If we have been accustomed to derive our ideas of the times of Henry the Fourth, from Shakespeare's delineation, we may study as a commentary on that well-known text a description from a contemporary statute, which informs us that many of the king's liege subjects were then daily beaten, wounded, imprisoned, and maimed, and then had their tongues cut out, or their eyes put out, in order that by this barbarous means difficulties might be put in the way of convicting the perpetrators of the offence of felony. Again, if we want a Clerk of Oxenford of the fourteenth century, we shall do well not to rely implicitly on the pleasing sketch of Chaucer, but to refer to the rough-and-ready picture drawn some few years later by a statute of Henry the Fifth. This act tells us that "several scholars and clerks of the University of Oxenford, unknown, armed and arrayed to make war, have often ousted and disseized persons of their lands and tenements in the counties of Oxford, Berks, and Bucks, and also have chased with dogs and greyhounds in divers warrens, parks, and forests, and taken deer, hares, and rabbits, menacing at the same time those who are the keepers of the same of their lives; and also, by the strong hand, have taken clerks convicted of felony by due process of law out of the custody of the ordinary, and suffered them to go at large." These views of society might be coloured to a very high tone by extracts relative to the oppression of the feudal era, the exactions and peculations of officials, especially of the king's purveyors, and the frauds and arbitrary dealings of the nobles.

Some curious little tricks are recorded in relation to the passing of some of these early statutes. Amongst these may be mentioned King Edward the Third's unkingly and inglo-

rious "Dissimulavimus." In the fifteenth year of this reign, statutes were passed whose effect seems to have been to increase the power of parliament, and to abridge that of the king. The king's consent having been obtained by the influence of the ruling faction, against his secret wishes, a few months afterwards he thought it not beneath his dignity to repeal the former enactments in these words. Dissimulavimus: "We dissimulated in the premises by protestation of revocation of the said statute, if indeed it should proceed, to eschew the danger which by the denying of the same we feared to come, forasmuch as the said parliament otherwise had been without despatching anything in discord dissolved (which God forbid), and the said pretended ordinance we permitted then to be sealed." In plain English: "I dissembled, endeavoured to save my conscience by a protest, made promises to avoid unpleasant consequences, obtained my ends, and now laugh at the credulity of those who imagined a king's word was inviolable." King Edward, in the preamble of this statute, expressed great jealousy of the prerogatives of his crown—he surely was very careless of one of its highest.

The system of proceeding in parliament by petition, the ancient representative of the modern bill, left open the door for much chicanery in the enactment of the statute laws. When the commons were anxious to get a grievance redressed, they presented a petition to the king, setting forth their wants. This petition was entered on the parliament-roll, together with the king's answer: which, by the way, was not given in plain English, but in a rigmorole of Norman-French. If he assented to the prayer of the petition, he said, the king wills it; if he refused it, he said he would consider about it. After the entry of the act on the parliament-roll, another process had to be gone through. It was then handed to the judges, to put into the form of a law and enter on the statute-roll; but as the commons were not present when this last process was effected, we can readily see how by a few strokes of the pen the effect of the original petition might be greatly changed, so that the promoters of the measure would be quite astonished when they beheld their metamorphosed offspring finally issue to the world as a perfect law. The instances in which this hocus-pocus was practised are said to have been very numerous, the most salient one being the case of the statute of the 36th of Edward the Third, when the commons obtained a great triumph, as they thought, over the pedants and interested parties of the day, by getting it enacted that all the pleadings in the law courts should be practised in English instead of in Norman-French, which the majority of the suitors did not understand. This good intention was defeated in great measure, by the interpolation, by the judges, of the words, "and that they be entered and inrolled in Latin." It was not until the second year of Henry the Fifth that the commons, upon a very strong

remonstrance, obtained an acknowledgment of their right to superintend the enrolment, and so guard against this kind of fraud. It was given in these words: "The kyng of his grace especial, graunteth yat fro hensforth nothing be enacted to the petitions of his commune yat be contrarie of hir askyng."

Besides this power of altering the petition on entering it on the statute-roll, and of course the right of refusing it in toto in parliament, the king had—or at least assumed—the right to respite or postpone the operation of an ordinance after he had assented to it. This he did by entering his *respectuatur* on the parliament-roll; and there happens to be an act of the eleventh year of Henry the Fourth, entered on the parliament-roll, but which appears never to have been placed on the statute-roll, which bears in the margin the words "*respectuatur per dominum principem et consilium suum*," which is said to have been one of Prince Hal's frolics. If so, what is the meaning of "*consilium suum*?" Could any of those "old lords of the council" that Falstaff speaks of, have connived at the joke; or were Falstaff, Bardolph, and Poins the "*consilium*," the advisers of this "great presumption," as Lord Coke styles it? Be it as it may, the matter caused grave discussion at that great tournament of lawyers the trial of the Earl of Macclesfield, which may be read in the sixteenth volume of Howell's State Trials, and where it was very wisely ruled that neither the presence of a "*respectuatur*," nor the absence of an entry on the statute-roll, could invalidate an act which had been solemnly assented to by the king.

King James the First, designated in the act relating to the Gunpowder Plot as "the most great, learned, and religious king" that ever reigned in England, in one of his orations to the parliament talks of "crop and cuffing" statutes. And Lord Bacon spoke of "sleeping statutes." For lack of a better subdivision of the subject, let us make one founded on these metaphors.

And, first, of cuffing statutes. The way in which many of the earlier ordinances battle with and cuff each other (though in a slightly different sense to that intended by the English Solomon) is instructive and entertaining. Prominent among this pugnacious class of acts, are those which were passed at the instance of a dominant faction in the state, with a view to the annihilation of an opposite party. They frequently take the extreme form of acts of attainder and confiscation; they are all remarkable for the violence with which they denounce their adversaries, and the eloquence with which they chant the praises of their own party; and when we remember that from the reign of Richard the Second until the accession of the present dynasty, there were not more than two or three reigns following each other in which the succession to the crown was undisturbed; and when we add the conspiracies of nobles, the schemes of faction, and even the honest efforts of men to shake off the oppression of tyrannous rulers;

we shall see an innumerable array of hostile and conflicting elements, which would be sure to evoke the spirit of angry and partisan legislation. When one faction had obtained a victory over another, the first thing they did was to invoke the aid of parliament to confirm their power by attainting and denouncing their antagonists: generally forgetting that another turn in the wheel of fortune might bring their enemies uppermost, and that then the words of a statute would be but a poor barrier against the will of the stronger. In the twelfth year of Edward the Second, an act was passed banishing those respectable characters, the Spencers—*père et fils*—from "the realm of England, never to return;" but very shortly afterwards, when the Spencers had again acquired an ascendancy, another statute was passed which delivered a very unceremonious cuff to the first, by repealing it and declaring that it would never have been passed had not the Earl of Hereford, with his armed bands, overawed the parliament and the king. A little while longer, and we see the nobles again in the ascendant, the Spencers again banished, and the act revoking their exile itself repealed. A repetition of this cuffing process took place in the reign of Richard the Second, and his successor. By the twentieth of the twenty-first of Richard, it was enacted by the party who probably foresaw their own impending ruin, that whoever should pursue to repeal, any of the statutes then passed, should be adjudged a traitor; but by an act passed in the first year of the *traitor* Henry the Fourth, the whole of the proceedings of this parliament were expressly repealed.

In much later periods of our history we find the same man a traitor in one reign, and a patriot in the next, although in the mean while he may have lost his head. Difficulties sometimes occurred in these matters; it was easy work to attain a man, confiscate his property, behead him and quarter him; but when it became a question as to the reversal of the attainder, a restitution of the status quo was not so easy; there was no surgeon in the pay of the ruling powers who could put the head on again which had been taken off by an unjust sentence; and although acts of parliament are extraordinarily powerful, there is not one that ever went so far as to enact that a man who had suffered judicial murder should, under pains and penalties, come to life again. Also, in some instances when the legal attainder was removed, a moral attainder might still remain which no legislative act could remove. On the other hand, when the question was the attainder of a man after his death, a foolish and imbecile attempt was sometimes made by his enemies to wreak their vengeance on his lifeless remains. Thus, after the attainder of Cromwell by the act of Charles the Second, the body of that great Englishman was torn from its resting-place in the sepulchre of the English kings, and publicly exposed on the gallows at Tyburn.

The statutes on the subject of religion are, perhaps, more remarkable than any for their

conflicting character; for in them we can trace constantly the influence of two opposing spirits: one fighting for freedom from the authority of Rome: the other battling as fiercely to maintain the Catholic faith. The thirty-fifth year of Edward the First presents us with the first cuff that our statutes dealt in hostility to Rome; and in the twenty-fifth year of Edward the Third a more vehement blow was delivered in the passing of the celebrated Statute of Provisors. This was followed, two years later, by another; again by a fourth, at the beginning of Richard the Second's reign. The object of all these statutes was, to restrain the influence and authority of foreign ecclesiastics and courts, in England. So far, so good; but acts of a different character soon appear. About the year 1390, Wickliffe and his followers, sensible of the radical defects in the existing system, were preaching about the country for a complete reform in the Church; the nation not being yet ripe for reformation, the legislature took up the matter, ordering the preachers of the new doctrines to be arrested and thrown into prison "until they were willing to justify themselves according to *reason* and the law of Holy Church." It is noticeable that in this statute the Pope is called "our holy father the Pope," while in the Statute of Provisors he is simply "the Bishop of Rome." On the settlement of the crown under Henry the Fourth, we come again upon provisions similar to those of the Statutes of Provisors; but by their side stands another act, the Statute *de hæretico comburendo*, which loudly asserted the orthodoxy of the Church of England.

After the subsidence of the Lollard movement, things went on pretty calmly in the matter of religious statutes for a hundred years, when the conflict with Rome was revived with tenfold fury. We may naturally expect much cuffing and contention among the statutes of Henry the Eighth's reign. The various acts relating to the succession, and to Henry's conjugal relations, present us with one important series, but those affecting the religious question are perhaps of more general interest. In these latter we still observe the oscillation already remarked upon, between hostility to Rome as a temporal power, and submission to her rule of faith. The ebb and flow of national feeling on the subject of the Reformation may afterwards be traced in the sweeping anti-Romish statutes of Edward the Sixth, and the equally sweeping pro-Romish statutes of Mary, with finally the counter-cuffs of Elizabeth, settling things somewhat in their modern form, and relieving the Statute-book of this fruitful element of discord.

The language of all these partisan acts is uniformly violent and exaggerated, and intended to deal decisive blows at the unfortunate "opposition." Long strings of denunciatory epithets follow each other, and the resources of the vocabularies of the respective periods are sorely tasked to supply the necessary strength of condemnation. There was a good reason for this, no doubt, in old times, when the statutes were promulgated by proclamation,

and not by print and paper as at the present day. When the herald appeared in his coat of many colours, at the market cross, and flourished his trumpet, it would have produced a strange anti-climax if his words had been confined to a mere recital of the dry law. He was therefore armed with a long rhetorical preamble to represent the excellence of the new measure, or its makers, and to hold up to execration the individual or object against which it was aimed.

Jack Cade, in an act touching his attainder, is denounced as "the most cruel, abominable tyrant, horrible, odious and arrant false traitor, John Cade . . . whose name, fame, acts and deeds ought to be removed out of the language and memory of every faithful Christian man perpetually." The instigators of the Gunpowder Plot are "malignant and devilish papists." The execution of Charles the First is spoken of in the act attainting Cromwell, as "the horrid and execrable murder of our late most glorious sovereign, Charles the First, of ever blessed and glorious memory, hath been committed by a party of wretched men, desperately wicked and hardened in impiety," &c.

Sometimes our statutes could rush to the other extreme, and exhaust the power of language in servile adulation of the reigning powers. If we would see how far base inordinate flattery can go, we should read from beginning to end the act (the very first in the reign) of James the First, for declaring and recognising his right to the throne. The following abridgment but faintly shadows forth the spirit of the original; but it may give some idea of its ludicrous effect.

It states that the acknowledgment of the king's title and the love of his subjects had been shown by several means, "yet, as we cannot do it too often or enough, so can there be no means or way so fit, both to sacrifice our unfeigned and hearty thanks to Almighty God, for blessing us with a sovereign adorned with the rarest gifts of mind and body in such admirable peace and quietness, and upon the knees of our hearts to agnise our most constant faith, obedience, and loyalty to your majesty and your royal progeny, as in this high court of parliament," &c., it is therefore declared by the authority of parliament that "they do recognise and acknowledge, and thereby express their unspeakable joys" that the crown descended by right of birth to his majesty, to whom "they most humbly and faithfully do submit and oblige themselves, their heirs, and posterities, for ever, until the last drop of their bloods be spent. Which, if your majesty shall be pleased (as an argument of your gracious acceptance) to adorn with your majesty's royal assent . . . according to our most humble desire (as a memorial of your princely and tender affection towards us), we shall add this also to the rest of your majesty's unspeakable and inestimable benefits."

What mental agonies must this composition have cost its framers! With what shamelessness have they sacrificed sense, grammar, and decorum at the feet of their ungainly idol; with

what laborious assiduity stuck in their eulogistic parentheses; with what recklessness tossed their metaphors abroad! Doubtless, they had their reward when, after executing the painful operation of going down on the knees of their hearts, and the mysterious process of agnising their faith and loyalty, they were blessed with the smiles and approbation of a monarch so brilliant as James the First.

A PANEFUL CATASTROPHE.

A TALE OF NORTH DEVON.

I.

OUR Gallic neighbours, modern "shoots of Arès,"
And, like their predecessors, famed in story,
Who fought in days of yore on Trojan prairies,
Somewhat too vain of homicidal glory;
Sneer at John Bull, whose only thought, they swear, is

To heap up riches, and in trade grow hoary;
"Une nation boutiquière," they call us,
And think by such a sobriquet to gall us.

II.

Well, so we are! We own the soft impeachment.
We have no abstract love for cutting throats;
We don't think human bones to stop a breach meant,
Nor human flesh to rot in hostile moats.
Such exploits form grand subjects for a speechment;
But we prefer whole skins within our coats;
We care not for "la gloire," nor do we see a
Virtue in "making war for an idea."

III.

A Nice idea, by the way, it proved,
For which their Emperor made war in Italy.
To see the Austrians bodily removed,
He pledged his word; which word, than glass
more brittle, he
Broke without shame; yet Cavour it behoved
To pay him quid pro quo; declaring wittily,
The dogma by which France to fall or stand meant,
The Nicene Creed, and not the Tenth Commandment!

IV.

And yet old honest John has had his fights,
And stout ones, too, when duty seemed to call him
To vindicate an injured nation's rights,
Or chastise foes, who threatened to enthrall him.
When Nap the First sent forth his swarms of blights
To ravage Europe, who stood up to maul him?
Who freely shed his blood, and spent his cash,
To pound the Usurper to "immortal smash?"

V.

Who, but John Bull? Who, quitting shops and
farms,
And trade and merchandise, and home and altar,
Forsook the joys of peace for war's alarms,
To rescue Europe from that tyrant's halter;
For twenty years stood bravely to his arms,
And in his resolution scorned to falter,
Till, from his height, he hurled Gaul's idol down,
And stripped him of his empire and his crown.

VI.

Surely this sneer comes with indifferent grace
From men who've proved John's prowess in the
field;
Who know that, with a foeman face to face,
Steel sword, no less than steel-yard, he can wield;
Whose fathers, too, the champions of their race,
John's stubborn valour oft has forced to yield,
Before and since the days of brave Queen Bessy,
From Waterloo to Agincourt and Cressy.

VII.

Shopkeeper as he is, John has his whims,
And often takes to fighting, as I've read it,
In other's quarrels, where he risks his limbs,
And for his pains gets nothing but the credit—
Debt, I should say! For debt's the cloud that dims
War's splendour, and makes thoughtful people
dread it;

Then, as to making war for an idea,
What think you of the war in the Crimea?

VIII.

The mention of this last suggests a tale,
Which, though it had a ludicrous conclusion,
Shows how John's warlike instincts still prevail
(As venturous foes may find to their confusion)
Above his love of trade and Bills of Sale;
How, spite of this same shopkeeping delusion,
Though other folks may blow their trumpets louder,
John loves the clang of arms and smell of powder.

IX.

There stands a borough in a western county—
I shan't say where, but give you leave to guess;
A borough chartered oft by Royal bounty,
Though in this land you'll nowhere find a less.
His hobby should some antiquary mount, he
Would ascertain (*I doubt it, I confess!*)
Among its musty records, after long quest,
That it was founded years before the Conquest!

X.

But be that as it may, the borough stands—
And plumes itself upon its ancient standing,
More than upon its revenues and lands;
Which, sooth to say, have ceased to be com-
manding.
For oft, when slander's tongue its meanness brands,
It boasts—its common chest with pride expand-
ing—
"While Exeter was yet a fuzzy down,
Our ancient borough was a corporate town!"

XI.

A Mayor and Corporation, too, it shows,
Though sorely pinched at times to fill its quorum;
Sergeants-at-mace, and jurymen in rows,
Rare boys at sessions' feasts to drain a jorum.
A Guildhall and a Jail its bounds enclose,
Where Justice reigns, as in the Roman Forum;
With Quarter Sessions, held in formal order,
A Town-clerk eke, and (*memini!*) Recorder!

XII.

How it escaped Municipal Reform,
Which doomed much larger boroughs to perdition,
And raised throughout the land a general storm
Against the authors of that inquisition,
Heaven only knows! One reason, 'mid the swarm,
Which might be rendered for this strange omission,
Is that, however willing to withdraw it,
It was so small—they really never saw it!

XIII.

Well, not long after the Crimean war,
When one of John Bull's martial transports seized
him,
And every country town was clamouring for
Some trophy of the foe, who long had teased him;
The gallant Mayor of (*I must beg, once more*
To name no names!) resolved, the idea pleased
him,
To signalise his mayoralty by something,
Which, in a man of peace, you'll deem a rum thing:

XIV.

Fired with the warlike spirit of the hour,
And jealous for his native borough's glory,
He penned a letter to the men in power
To beg them, whether they were Whig or Tory,
To send him down from Woolwich or the Tower,
Whereby his mayoralty might live in story,
One of the cannon taken at Sebastopol,
Whose capture cost the Allies so long and vast a pull.

XV.

Having "a friend at court" (for, I should state,
The manor's lord is styled the Duke of Cornwall),
He gained his object without much debate
(A flat refusal he would scarce have borne well!) ;
And, in due course, his worship to elate
With such a prize, as should exalt his horn well,
By way of something like "a real astounder,"
They sent him down a six-and-thirty pounder!

XVI.

A huge great gun it was, some nine feet long,
And firmly mounted on a handsome carriage,
Inscribed with iron letters, stout and strong,
Stating that it was captured from his Czarage,
Before Sebastopol, now famed in song,
And to our loyal borough given in marriage,
To have and hold, that is, in bonds cannon-ical,
Till one or both were blotted from Time's chronicle.

XVII.

Well, down it came by train, and down to meet it,
In formal state, went Mayor and Corporation ;
While at their heels, in headlong haste to greet it,
Rushed the whole borough's eager population ;
And crowding round, as if they meant to eat it,
They hugged and kissed it (!) when it reached
the station ;
Then, giving three loud cheers for Prince and Crown,
They "buckled to," and dragged it up to town.

XVIII.

A general holiday proclaimed its coming,
And joyous peals rang from the old church-steeple,
So great a noise of fife and of drumming
Sure ne'er was heard among that sober people.
The shouts with which they rent the air were
stunning
(Police at such a time the peace could keep ill),
In short, both old and young with joy were frantic ;
You might have heard them half across the Atlantic.

XIX.

Arrived at length in front of the Guildhall,
His worship slowly halted the procession ;
Then, turning round, addressed them one and all
In glowing periods, on their proud possession
Of such a trophy, to record the fall
Of Russia's mightiest stronghold of oppression ;
And hoped it long might stand to tell the story
Of England's might, and France's sister-glory.

XX.

Long cheering followed on the Mayor's address,
And never in this world did man feel prouder,
To think his townsmen valued his success
About the gun ; but still the cheers rang louder,
When, raising his spare form above the press,
He cried, if any one would fetch some powder,
He'd pay the shot, no matter at how high rate,
If any venturesome spirit liked to fire it.

XXI.

A fitting climax to the day's festivity,
'Twas voted by the general acclamation ;
But, ready as his worship was to give it, he
Observed among the crowd some hesitation.

In fact, *this* thought had damped their first activity :—
That though, belonging to a sporting nation,
Fearing nor guns nor pistols ; yet, confound her!
They rather funk'd a six-and-thirty pounder.

XXII.

At length, an aged pensioner was found
Who, in his younger days, had tackled Boney,
Who volunteered to let them hear her sound
Her iron war-notes, "con espressione!"
So, ramming home of powder many a pound,
He seized a red-hot poker from some crony,
And, while the crowd stood mute with fear and
wonder,
Bang! went the monster, with a noise like thunder.

XXIII.

Then rose from earth to sky one hideous yell,
"Then shrieked the timid, and stood still the
brave!"
And chimney-pots came clattering down pell-mell,
Enough to wake the dead within each grave.
Then female lips were heard, in accents fell,
Screaming, as the sound reached them wave on
wave,
"Ah, drat our mazed ould Mayor! Just bark, them
winders!
He've smashed them all to fifty thousand flinders!"

XXIV.

And true enough it was! A flash! a crash!
A universal earthquake shook the town!
And casements right and left, with headlong dash,
Upon the pavement fast came rattling down.
Down from the walls came pictures with a clash,
And chimney-ornaments, worth many a crown ;
While, as it smashed their crockery to bits,
It frightened seven old women into fits.

XXV.

One scene of desolation met the sight
When the smoke lifted, and the roar had died ;
Whole shop-fronts, blown to atoms by the might
Of that explosion, yawned on every side.
Their main street's sorely ruined plight
The burgesses with rueful visage eyed!
Sebastopol itself, though twelve months battered,
Could scarce have been more miserably shattered.

XXVI.

Conceive our martial magistrate's dismay,
To scan the ruin which his gun had wrought!
The shattered fragments all around that lay,
As if some mighty battle had been fought!
The broken slates and glass that strewed the way:
When down in triumph first that gun he brought,
He little dreamt, in summing up his gains,
He'd have to pay the glazier—for his panes.

XXVII.

His costs for damages were something frightful ;
Because, for every cracked old glass in town,
The owners, deeming such a chance delightful,
Upon his worship for repairs came down.
And many a pound he paid more than was rightful,
To satisfy their claims, or clamours down ;
Protesting, as he gazed upon each bill awry,
He never more would meddle with artillery!

XXVIII.

Five hundred squares! No wonder that the Guild
Of Glaziers voted him a right good fellow ;
And prayed that, when the office next he filled,
He'd make that monster gun once more to bellow.
Our pensioner, in long campaigning skilled,
Declared, with drink when waxing rather mellow,
That our great Duke, of whom he then most prattles,
Ne'er broke so many squares in all his battles!

XXIX.

That soul of wit and humour, the Recorder,
 Who ne'er lets slip a chance to crack his jest,
 No sooner heard his borough's sad disorder,
 Than gravely thus his judgment he expressed:
 "Since Mr. Mayor has launched within our border
 This avalanche of glaziers, I suggest,
 His venerable name we henceforth class
 In borough records as our *Mayor de glace*!"

MORAL.

Ye men of peace, who rule our country boroughs,
 Dispensing homespun justice to the lieges,
 Take warning by the Mayor of —'s sorrows
 (It wasn't Axminster, nor yet Lyme Regis),
 Lest on your brows you grave untimely furrows;
 But leaving pithings only fit for sieges
 To the brave captains of our Piques and Shannons,
 Stick to the laws—and let alone the cannons!

THE TRAINING-STABLE.

A LONG ten miles at last from the bustle of the Line, let us stay for a moment on the brow of this next hill to enjoy in quiet the glorious view that breaks before us. Ridged in on one of the highest ranges of England, what an undulating sweep of soft green sward now meets the eye! There may be some further boundary, but it is all illimitable in the horizon, and the sweet springy down-land flows on in an ocean of unbroken plain. Little care would the husbandman seem to have hereabouts, although, in that hollow to the left, you note the comfortable well-to-do homestead of Thistley Grove. Yet farther away to the right, buried in the clump of trees from which it takes its title, is Elm Down—the high home of the gaze-hound—famous for the Ladies Sylvia, Aurora, and Diana, who manage their prancing palfreys so gracefully, and talk so learnedly to the admiring crowd of "turn," "twist," and "go-by." Let your glance rest under that narrow belt of firs just rising from another dip of the wavy open, and tell us what you see there. Nothing but some sheep? Then the lambs can scarcely keep themselves warm this nipping March morning; for, look again, and there are some half a dozen of them off, as hard as they can go! A capital pace, too, for now that orderly methodical line is lost. And the lambs, as they draw towards us, while—somewhat scared—we stand aside to make way for them, gradually develop into a string of long-striding, carefully-clothed horses, snorting in all the glow of speed and health as they rush past, and coping in their strength with the tiny lads who sit them so close and hold them so hard. They are stopping, however, as they reach the rest of the flock again, and the shepherd might, perhaps, be kind enough to let us have a more composed look at them.

Mr. Shepherd, who, in his well-cut jacket and rifleman leggings, might be a sporting farmer or fox-hunter in multi, will be "only too happy" to show us and tell us all he can. There would really seem to be no secret about it; and were the lair

himself down—the owner of these thirty or forty thorough-breds—he would only join our Mentor in calling them over to us. Let us begin with that company of five—the little lot, by-the-by, being worth at the very least some twenty thousand pounds. Mark that lazy careless self-satisfied looking "old horse," as they fondly call him, which leads the string—see how the boy has actually to kick him along in his lolloping walk, or even to strike at him sharply through the heavy clothing with his ashén plant. But the chesnut, as he honours you with just one sagacious glance through that plaided cowl, says, as plainly as can be, that he knows this is all child's play, and that he can go away when he is really wanted to go. He speaks but the simple truth, for Barnoldby is the champion of his order, the best horse in the world at this moment, who has done more, and has done it better, and has worn longer than anything else we should see were our pilgrimage on the Thistle Down to reach on to its utmost limit. The Derby, the Royal Cup, the Great Two-year-old—even Mr. Shepherd can scarcely trust his memory to tell of all that low lengthy animal has achieved. So we come on to the next in order to him. "A three-year-old colt, sir, that we call Aristophanes," is the simple introduction, given with an air of indifference, which we attempt so indifferently to echo as to bring up an involuntary smile on the countenance of our guide. And this is Aristophanes! This resolute powerful bay, who follows on with something in his air and manner of indolent hauteur, is the great favourite for the great race of the year. This is the horse that the papers write about, the clubs talk about, and the sporting world perpetually thinks about. Should he be heard to cough, it might make a difference of thousands. Were he to spring a sinew, or throw a curb, or even to turn up that haughty nostril of his over the next feed of corn, the knowledge of such a calamity would convulse the market. There are great men who would give much for the opportunity to see what we shall now, as Mr. Shepherd sends the illustrious five down to the other end of the plantation, with orders to "come along at a pretty good pace."

Now keep your eyes open, as old Barnoldby leads off, almost mechanically, with the lad hustling and threatening to force him out. But he has done his duty ably enough already, and our gaze centres, some few lengths off, on his successor. Mr. Shepherd can bear it. "The crack" is going sweetly, and the more he extends himself, the more determinedly he pulls at his rider, the more you like him. There is the long even stealthy almost slow-seeming stride, like the steady stroke of the accomplished swimmer, and yet with what liberty he strikes out, how well his hind-legs come under him, and with what courage he faces the hill, as old Barnoldby, having made a pace at last, appears wickedly inclined to find out what the young one can do. Their Two Thousand nag is behind him, a strong favourite for the Spring Handicap is fourth, and a lop-eared colonist of high charac-

ter last. They are all good, but we linger over Aristophanes as he walks back, only all the better for his breathing, and we close at once with the invitation to see him in his box.

That bevy of bays and greys yonder are the lambskins we first met with; and the handsome aged horse, even with so much substance about him, is still good enough to win Royal Plates, though the laird does talk of riding him in the Park.

But Mr. Shepherd thinks we had better stroll on to the house, that Thistley Grove which looked so comfortable in the distance, and where a biscuit and a glass of the Barnoldby sherry await us. The rooks in the long elm avenues are busy in their preparations for a welcome to the little strangers. The famous dowagers of high descent, and worth at least a thousand pounds each, are looking to maternal cares of their own, as they group themselves under the grand old trunks, or walk off, in some disdain that their dishevelled beauties should be made a mark for the sight-seeing stranger. There are yearlings, already of fabulous prices; an interesting invalid, Sweet Blossom, with a refined melancholy about her that is quite catching; and the prettiest horse in England, who has had the terrible misfortune to "hit his leg," and is in physic as a consequence. That massive door-Belle is a daughter of the rare old Grantley hound, and this short-horn heifer has a pedigree as long as that of Aristophanes himself, whose toilet by this time must surely be completed. He has been brushed and whiped until his brownish hard-coloured coat shines again; his large flat legs are duly washed and banded; his nostrils spunged out; his long thin mane neatly combed and arranged. He is just set fair, with the hood finally thrown over his quarter-piece, when (to his manifest disgust) we are ushered into his box.

No one likes to be interfered with at dinner-time, and "Harry" strikes out rather angrily with his near fore-leg when his valet proceeds once more to strip him. That eye is full of character as he turns it upon you, but the long lean head is not so handsome as it is expressive; how fluently it is set on to his thin somewhat straight neck, and how beautifully that again, fits into his magnificent sloping shoulders! There is breadth and freedom of play, supported by long powerful arms, and short wiry legs, heavier in the bone than any hairy-heeled John Jolly that ever drew a drayman. Come a little more forward, and glance over that strong muscular back, those drooping quarters, and big clean hocks; and then say if the thorough-bred horse, in high condition, be not a very hero of strength and swiftness! He would gallop the famed Arabian of the desert, to death, and you would be but as an infant with him. He would rush off with you in his first canter, docile and sluggish as he was at exercise; with one lash out of that handsome haunch, he would send you far over his head, or "order" you out of his box in an instant. Somewhat grim is the humour of Aristophanes, and, as we hear as plainly as

he does, the rattle of his dinner-service, suppose we wish him good morning, and assure Mr. Shepherd confidentially when once more in the open air, that he is the very finest Derby horse we ever saw, and that we shall seriously think about backing him for "a stoater," "a monkey," "a hyæna," or—a two-shilling piece.

There are nearly forty others to strip and talk over, many of established repute, more of coming promise, and all, save the handsome Park horse that is to be, of the highest and purest lineage. And now that we have seen them, and when we begin to tire of studying so perfect a picture, let us pause for a minute to reflect over its peculiar tone and treatment, and to ask, were you ever over any manufactory, did you ever inspect any gigantic "establishment," where the good genius of rule and order had a better home than at Thistley? Have you found a stirrup-leather out of place? Have you noticed the tiniest of those little lads ever flurried or awkward over his work? Have you heard an oath, or so much as an angry word, since we have been here? "Don't speak so sharply to your mare, boy!" was Mr. Shepherd's mild reproof to the boy who cried out at the white-legged filly when she twisted round suddenly on her way home. And again: "I say, young gentleman, wouldn't you look all the better if you had your hair cut?" to the other boy, much rejoicing in his golden locks. But we will have a word ourselves with a third—this natty youth coming across the yard, with his horse's muzzle packed, as some travellers packed their sponge-bags, with all kinds of toilet traps. Jack Horner is his name; he was born in London, but came down to Mr. Shepherd as apprentice, some three years since. He looks about twelve years of age, but rather indignantly says he is past fifteen, and that he does not weigh four stone. There is a combination of fortune's and nature's favours, rarely to be met with in this world! Can any one by any possibility imagine anything more acutely wide-awake than a boy born in London, and educated in a racing stable! Who is unnaturally small for his years, who can sit close, hold his tongue, and hold the hardest puller in the stable. Go on and prosper, little Jack Horner! And when the days of thy serving time are over, you shall jump into a living, worth double that of the parson of the parish, and end by having a heavier income-tax than the most famous Q.C., who ever worried a witness or bullied a judge. The nobles of the land shall send in their special retainers, humbly asking that you will appear for them when you can. The anxious telegram shall seek you out. The best of champagne, and the oldest of Havannahs shall court your taste; and when you go a courting yourself, you shall woo the dark-eyed daughter of The Blue Dragon, with armlets of emeralds, and pearls of price! "All very fine, sir," says little Jack Horner—though not without a notion that it may be all very true, with time and luck to help him. At present, Jack gets ten pounds a year and a suit of clothes, with three good meals a day, and, despite his weight, a fair share of beef and beer.

His one great mission is to look after his horse, for he is rarely called upon to do more. In the summer he is with him by daybreak, if he do not sleep at his heels, in a couch that looks like a corn-bin, but which, with no "double debt to pay," unrolls into a bed and nothing more. The attendant sprite of Aristophanes sleeps over him; for that great horse might contrive to cast himself in his box, or the bad fairy might try to come in through the keyhole, or something or other might occur that would need the ready assistance of his body-guard. Dressing his horse lightly over, and feeding him, are amongst the first of Jack Horner's duties, to be followed immediately by the morning exercise—the walk on to the Down, the gentle canter, the smart gallop, or the long four mile that has now generally superseded "the sweat." Horses are no longer loaded with cloths and fagged and scraped, but they get the same amount of work without the unnecessary severity once general and fatal. Common sense has of late years driven out much of the conventional practice of the training-stable, and a horse is now treated in accordance with his peculiar temper and constitution. Some horses are so nervous that they begin to fidget at the mere sight of the muzzle with which a horse was, as a rule, "set" the night before he ran; and now, not one horse in fifty is ever "set." Other horses know as readily, the intention with which their manes are plaited into thick heavy tresses—a part of the etiquette costume of the course now by no means so carefully observed as of yore—and some begin to "funk," as the school-boys say, so soon as the stranger Vulcan comes to shift their light shoes for the still lighter "plates." Some horses will almost train themselves, without needing any clothing whatever, while grosser animals require continual work. The late Lord Eglinton's famous Van Tromp was a very indolent horse, and took an immense "preparation," two or three good racers being solely employed to lead him in his gallops; and his temper was so bad, that for the last year he was ridden in a muzzle, to prevent his flying at the other horses out. His yet more renowned half-brother, The Flying Dutchman, went, on the contrary, so freely, and pulled so much, that he never had half the work of the other, and usually galloped by himself. But he was of a most excitable temperament, both in and out of the stable.

This great business of galloping over, Jack Horner brings his horse back in his own proper place in the string, to the stable, where he is dressed again far more elaborately, and when "set fair," is fed. A horse in work will eat in a day his six "quarters" of corn (of sixteen quarters to the bushel), often mixed with a few old beans, and occasionally, as at Thistley Grove, with some sliced carrots; while he has hay "at discretion," regulated either by his own delicate appetite, or meted out to his too eager voracity. Then, with the horse left in quiet to his meal, the boy begins to think of his own, which in the sum-

mer is breakfast, and in the winter dinner. We may be satisfied that unless Jack is to have a mount in the next Handicap, there is no use for the muzzle here either; and Mrs. Shepherd has a boy all the way from the North Riding, whose prowess over suet pudding is something marvellous to witness. Almost all the lads are from a distance, for the cottager's wife cannot reconcile it to herself to see her dear Billy crying to come home again; and so surely as he begins to cry, so surely does he go home. Mrs. Shepherd, however, is a good mother to those who stay with her. They go to the village church regularly every Sunday, and there is a chapel-room at the Grove, which is a school-room every evening in the week, and a place of worship on the Sabbath.

On the other side of the Thistle Down, four of Mr. Dominie the public trainer's lads wear surplices as singers in the church of one of the strictest clergymen in Downshire. They attend an evening school, where the trainer's son is a teacher, and Dominie himself is churchwarden. Had Holcroft lived in these days, he would never have longed for Life in London; and *That's your sort!* would have been an echo rather of the green sward than of the green room. Mr. Dominie makes it a condition when hiring a lad that he shall regularly attend a place of worship, and some trainers walk in procession to church with their boys, precisely as if the establishment were an academy where the neighbouring youth were "genteely boarded." The economy of a public stable is very similar to that of Mr. Shepherd's. The lads get about the same wages, but seldom with the addition of the suit of clothes; and some, but not so many as their employers could wish, are bound apprentice for four or five years on first entering. A really clever child, when so articulated, may be turned to considerable profit, for there is a continual demand for such light weights, and of course the master can generally make his own terms as to how they shall share the fees received for riding races for other people. To "hold his tongue," and "keep his hands down," are the two golden rules of a jockey boy's life, and the height of his ambition to ride in public: should he be very successful at first, he is apt to lose his head; and here the indentures do him good service, by keeping him in proper control until he has completed his education. Should he then have outgrown the stable in size and weight, he is still qualified to make the best of grooms. To tend on the high-bred horse that is, and not to look after a horse and chaise, clean knives and shoes, dig in the garden, wait at table, and help Mary Anne in her airings with the double-bodied perambulator.

Jack Horner's early career has scarcely fitted him for "a place" like this; but if you really have need of a groom, the training-stable is as the University for turning out a first-class man. Of late years, private establishments have been coming more and more into fashion, and, for a gentleman with anything like a stud of his own, there can be no other so satisfactory or

legitimate a means of engaging in the sport. Thistley Grove is at this time about the most successful of any stable in the kingdom, either public or private; and a brother of our Mr. Shepherd is now in receipt of the highest salary ever paid to a private trainer. He has six hundred pounds a year, with a capital house to live in, and, even beyond this, "farms" the horses and boys for his employer at so much a head. This scale, however, is considerably beyond the average. As a rule, a trainer is now a well-conducted, comparatively well-educated man, with, of course, the occasional exception we find in every other rank and calling. But the ignorant cunning sot, once too true a type of his order, is dying out with the old-fashioned huntsman, who got drunk as a duty when he had killed his fox.

Let us suppose that the laird of the Thistle Down, in the pride of his heart, has presented you with one of those famous mares we disturbed but now under the elms—more fatal gift, may be, than that Trojan Horse whereof Virgil has sung. The Dowager Duchess is your own, and straightway your ambition is fired to win the Derby. With good fortune, the year's keep of the mare and other preliminary expenses, your foal has cost you some seventy pounds up to the day he is born. Subsequently, when weaned, there will be a year and a half of the idleness of infancy, what time he is being fed with corn, fondled and handled and half broken; and this will call for a full eighty pounds more. Then, in the September previous to entering on his second year, he goes up to school, where he gets board, lodging, attendance, and teaching, for somewhere about fifty shillings a week. The customary charge in a high-class public stable, is two guineas a week, including the lad: while to this must be added the smith, saddler, physick, and other incidental charges, to bring up the total. A year and a half spent thus with Mr. Dominic will add another item to the account of one hundred and ninety pounds; and as you keep him specially to win the Derby, his expenses to and at Epsom will be but some eight pounds more. The stake is one of fifty pounds each, the jockey's fee for a "chance" mount is three pounds—he will expect five hundred if he should win—and so, by the time that lilac body and red sleeves is "coloured" on the card; by the time that those three-and-thirty thorough-bred colts have dipped down from the paddock to the post, there is not one among them who faces the flag but has cost some four hundred pounds to get there. During the year 1861, between eighteen and nineteen hundred horses actually ran in England and Ireland, while there were many others which, from a variety of circumstances, never appeared, although in training. Beyond these, even, we must include the scepole-chasers, whose names rarely appear in the strictly legitimate records of Wetherby. Then we may guess at the amount of money expended on horse-flesh, living at the rate of from two pounds five shillings to two pounds ten shillings a week each horse. The large breeding establishments, the outrageously

heavy travelling expenses, when a horse pays a guinea a night for his box, and other items of outlay, we must not stay to consider but, "keeping" them to their work when at home, they have, of course, the very best of oats and hay, all bought in at the best prices: while a trainer will often pay a farmer more for the privilege to exercise on a down, than the tenant gives for it as a sheep-walk. So far from this being a detriment to the land, "the bite" is nowhere so sweet as where the horses gallop; and the flock will continue to follow the string, as they change from one side of the hill to the other.

Let us leave the high-mettled racer, where we first found him in such good companionship, with the little lambs mocking his long stride, as they run matches against each other to the tinkling of the starting-bell with which the wandering ewe will clear the way. How different in its sober, monotonous echo, to that quick, thrilling alarm which proclaims "they're off!" When, in the noise and turmoil of the crowded course, we are challenged on every side by the hoarse husky Ishmaelite who will "lay agen" everything and everybody; when, amidst the din of discord and the wild revelry of such a holiday, we catch a glimpse of the yellow jacket of Aristophanes as he sweeps by in his canter, or struggles home to a chorus of shouts and yells, of cracking of whips and working of arms; hero, then, though he may be, high though that number *nine* be exalted, we see little of the beauty and poetry of the thoroughbred horse's life. We must seek this, rather in the sweet solitude of the downs and by-ways, where the shepherd's hut is the ending-post, and the farmer, thrice happy in his ignorance, will lean carelessly on his stick as they march by to ask "What's the name of that 'un?"

NOT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

It is not the least striking part of the following shameful story, that the facts it narrates are not yet one hundred years old.

Abbeville, a manufacturing and commercial town in the province of Picardy, and now a chef-lieu d'arrondissement in the department of the Somme, had of old been accustomed to witness absurd and barbarous punishments. About 1272, a murderer whom the Mayor had put in prison, was taken out by his orders at the moment when the murdered person breathed his last, and swore over relics, in the presence of the citizens assembled by ringing the bell, that he would depart from the town within a fortnight, and cross the seas never to return. In 1286, by judgment of the town and by counsel of the Mayor and Sheriffs (*échevins*) of Amiens, one Jean d'Omatre, found guilty of counterfeiting the stamp applied to the Abbeville cloths, was branded on the face with the real stamp, and banished for life. In 1291, an individual, suspected of larceny, was banished, after slitting his ear, with the threat that, if he came back again, they would hang him by the neck. In

the same year, an inhabitant of Cahon was also banished for theft; if he returned to the town or its suburbs, one of his members was to be cut off, *whichever the Sheriffs pleased to select*. In 1296, a woman, found guilty of coining, was buried alive, in the presence of the justices of the town. Other women, found guilty of thefts, suffered the same punishment.

In 1346, an individual was stabbed in a drunken brawl. The municipal authorities held an inquest, discovered who were the guilty parties, and rang their three bells to summon them to appear and answer the charge; but they neither came nor showed themselves. Whereupon, the public were ordered to proceed to demolish the houses of the murderers, in virtue of certain articles in the corporation charter. But, on their arrival, the wives of the accused parties required the mayor and the sheriffs to maintain their rights, summoning immediately witnesses to prove that their jointure gave them a life interest in the houses intended to be pulled down. The mayor at once caused the work to be stopped, and the demolition did not take place until after the decease of the respective women.

It will hardly be believed that animals then were formally accused and put upon their trial according to the rules of criminal jurisprudence; nevertheless, proofs of the fact are furnished by the archives of the Mairie of Abbeville: "It happened that on Saturday the xvth day of December, in the year mcccxciiii, Belot, daughter of Jehan Guillain, she being laid in her cradle and asleep, was strangled and her face devoured by a little pig, belonging to the said Guillain; for which matter and by deliberation of the council, he, the pig, was dragged and hung by the hind-legs, on Christmas Eve, the xxivth day of the aforesaid year, and by judgment of the mayor and sheriffs, Matthew Barbaust being mayor."

Another pig, guilty of the same crime, was arrested by the *sénéchal's* sergeants, and by them made over to the jurisdiction of the municipal officers, at whose hands it also suffered death by hanging by the hind-legs. A third pig, again, for murdering a babe in its cradle, was hung in like manner from a gallows, in virtue of the sentence pronounced by the mayor, on the leads of the Shrievalty, to the tolling of bells. A like instance occurred in 1479. The condemned animal was driven to the place of execution in a cart; the mace-bearers escorted it as far as the gallows, and the executioner received sixty sous for his trouble.

To pass on to an epoch nearer to the date of our present history, in 1724 three soldiers were hung on the same gallows, in the Place St. Pierre, for stealing forty-seven pounds of candles, valued at eighteen livres sixteen sous. In the following year, the wife of a porter, surnamed La Commandante, was taken up for beggary and conducted to the steeple of the Hôtel de Ville, where was a wooden cage for confining mad people. The wretched woman was put into this

cage, and almost instantly afterwards hung herself there with her apron. The municipal officers proceeded to the prison to ascertain the fact of her death, the cause which had occasioned it, and to institute proceedings against the body. They discovered that she had already been in the hands of justice, being branded on the shoulder. They caused the body to be taken to a dungeon of the Cour Ponthieu, where they left it completely stripped. When their inquest was over, the executioner dressed the body in a chemise, put it in a sort of wicker box which did not conceal it from view, and in which the head was not enclosed, fastened it to a horse's tail, and dragged it, with the face to the ground, as far as the market, where it was hung on a gallows by the feet; then, dragged away in the same fashion, in the midst of an immense concourse of people, it was finally buried in a wheel-rut. Wheel-ruts existed then, deep enough to serve as graves.

In 1730, a young man of Abbeville, who ventured during the night to throw a stick at a little group of images representing the Resurrection, which was suspended in the middle of one of the streets in honour of the fête of Saint Sepulchre, was shot dead by a gunsmith named Leduc. The authorities made inquiries, but took no further proceedings, heedless of the solicitations of the mother of the young man whom Leduc had murdered. Tired of appealing in vain to the law, the wretched parent contrived to obtain, through one of her relations who was a servant at court, an order requiring the Abbeville magistrates to go on with the trial. The offender was condemned to death. But at every consecration of a Bishop of Orleans, the new prelate had the privilege of pardoning a criminal; and in this way Leduc escaped the scaffold.

At every step, you came upon crosses, images of saints, Madonnas, and Ecce Homos. They were to be found in every churchyard, in every street, in the squares, on the ramparts, on the bridges, at the portal of every church, against the walls of every convent.

The hero of our tragic tale, the Chevalier de la Barre, was the grandson of a lieutenant-general who wrote several works on Guiana, of which he was named governor in 1663. Born in the neighbourhood of Coutances, in Normandy, young De la Barre spent the earlier part of his life with a country curé, and afterwards resided with a farmer. He was clever and good natured; but, being left an orphan in his childhood, his education was very much neglected; which did not prevent his entertaining, nor his discussing with imprudent levity, the free philosophical opinions then current among the French nobility. In short, De la Barre and his knot of young friends drew upon themselves the ill-will of the clergy. It was rumoured that he one day got within the walls of a convent under the disguise of female attire; and he and his companions really passed within five-and-twenty paces of a procession of Capuchin monks bearing the Host, without kneeling or taking off their hats. The excuse was, that

they were hastening to dinner, and that it rained—no excuse whatever, at that time and place.

De la Barre enjoyed the patronage of one of his relations, Madame Feydeau de Brou, Abbess of Willancourt, whose nephew he was according to the custom of Brittany.* This lady adopted him, in a manner, in 1764; she gave him masters, and procured him a lieutenant's commission. She lodged him in the external buildings of the convent, and invited him to meet the select society by whom she was visited, and who moulded his manners to the ways of the world. Voltaire says of her that she was amiable, strictly moral in her conduct, gentle-tempered and cheerful, benevolent and prudent without superstition. She often asked him to supper, together with several of his young friends (amongst them, one named Moinsel and another D'Étalonde de Morival), whose spirits were high, but whose faith was of the weakest. Reports were current that these young people, in their secret parties of pleasure, were irreligious as well as dissolute, and that the chevalier partook of their follies. Witnesses (mostly of the lowest class, who had waited on the young men at their merry meetings) were subsequently brought to prove that they recited Piron's notorious verses, sang libertine songs, spoke against the doctrine of the Eucharist, and profaned by mimicry the ceremonies of the Church. The state of the times, the profligacy of the court, the looming of a political tempest on the horizon, the antagonism of the philosophers and the Catholic clergy, must all be remembered while pronouncing judgment on the conduct of these thoughtless youths.

Had the matter been confined to private orgies even worse than these, the names of De la Barre and his associates would probably never have reached our days; but during the night of the 8-9th of August, 1765, a wooden crucifix, standing on the Pont-Neuf, was mutilated with a cutting instrument. In the same night, another crucifix, planted in the cemetery of Saint Catherine, was covered with filth. These events excited a general disturbance throughout the town. The procureur du roi (king's attorney), a mystical enthusiast, caused the severest inquiry to be made. The Bishop of Amiens (De la Motte d'Orléans), a naturally good-natured prelate, but excited by bigoted coteries and enfeebled by age, published a "Monitoire," inviting the public to denounce the offenders, with the threat of censures and excommunication. On the 8th of October he himself came to Abbeville, accompanied by twelve missionaries, and with them went in procession, barefoot, with ropes round their necks, to the insulted crosses, prostrated himself before them, and without foreseeing the consequences of his fatal step, hastily pronounced

his opinion of the culprits, declaring that they deserved the extremest punishment. This expiatory ceremonial, at which all the civil and judicial authorities were present, made a profound impression on the populace. More than a hundred witnesses, summoned to depose to facts relating to the mutilation, spoke of impious talk uttered in the heat of thoughtless carousals by young people of the town, but which afforded no clue whatever to the affair of the crucifixes. With this were mingled rumours of hosts (consecrated wafers), stolen from churches, being stabbed with knives, and miraculously bleeding from the wounds received.

In most instances of popular excitement ending in outbursts of popular frenzy, some secret instigator has been at work, fanning the flame unperceived. In the present case the underground agitator, whoever he was, took great pains to fix suspicion on the Chevalier de la Barre. Popular rumour and probability (although doubts as to the facts have been raised) assign this villanous manœuvre to the lieutenant-particulier and criminal assessor, Pierre Duval de Soicourt, who had a private grudge against the Abbess of Willancourt, and who, unable to injure the lady herself, might seek revenge on her adopted child. If we may believe Voltaire, Duval, although sixty years of age, annoyed Madame de Willancourt with importunities which only excited her utmost aversion, so far even as to exclude him from her society. Duval, in revenge, did all he could to beset her with legal and pecuniary difficulties. De la Barre took his aunt's part with imprudent earnestness, and spoke to the old assessor with provoking harshness.

Moreover, in the Abbess of Willancourt's convent there resided a charming girl belonging to a very wealthy family, who was Duval's ward, and whom he desired to marry to his son, a young man of coarse and brutal manners. The abbess, yielding to her pupil's entreaties, who loathed the idea of such a union, opposed the marriage and succeeded in getting another guardian appointed in the place of Duval de Soicourt. Either of these affronts sufficed to make the criminal assessor vow eternal hatred to the abbess.

Duval, therefore, in his official capacity, brought a formal accusation against De la Barre and four other young men belonging to the first families of the neighbourhood. It is a damning circumstance for Duval's memory that, with four out of five of the families of which the parties accused were members, he had had serious misunderstandings. "I mean to frighten Madame de Willancourt," he said, "and show her that I am not a man to be despised." Mixing up the affair of the procession with the reports of irreligious talk, he coupled the whole with the offence of mutilating the crucifixes; so that the result should be to punish as mutilators of the holy symbol those who should be merely convicted of impious discourse.

The arrest of the culprits was decreed. Three

* Suppose two cousins-german to be married, the son of one of these cousins will address the other as "Ma tante"—"Aunt." He is her neveu à la mode de Bretagne.

of them immediately took to flight, amongst whom was D'Etalonde, who contrived to put himself under the protection of the Abbot of Lieu-Dieu. This generous prelate, whose conduct forms a noble contrast with the intolerance of the other priests, concealed the fugitive in the depths of his convent, and provided him with means of escape through the assistance of the Abbot of Tréport, his excellent and worthy friend. De la Barre, relying too confidently on the influence and credit of his relations, the D'Ormessons, who occupied distinguished positions in the parliament and the council, refused to leave France. He was arrested on the first of October in the Abbey of Longvilliers, near Montreuil, and brought the very same day to Abbeville. Moinsel was seized the day following. De la Barre was nineteen years of age; Moinsel only fourteen.

Not a single creature in the whole town had witnessed the commission of the mutilation. De la Barre was only strongly suspected of having taken part in it. The legislation of every country maintains the principle that, before it can be punished, a crime must be proved to have been committed. But even if it had been proved that the Chevalier de la Barre had injured and defiled crucifixes, no law then existed in France punishing with death either the breaking of images or other similar blasphemous conduct. The edict of 1666 merely ordains that blasphemers, after repeating their offence a certain number of times, shall have their tongue cut out, leaving to theologians the task of defining what amount of sacrilege is deserving of death. A decision of the Sorbonne was requisite to pronounce judgment on the theological points. In default of law, it appears that they disinterred an "Edict of Pacification," given by the Chancellor de l'Hôpital under Charles the Ninth, and revoked soon afterwards.

However that may be, De la Barre and D'Etalonde were condemned to a terrible death. The latter, a refugee in Prussia, was out of the reach of the tormentors; but the poor unhappy boy, Moinsel, transferred from dungeon to dungeon, following the Chevalier wherever he was dragged, narrowly escaped from sharing his fate. Whilst Madame de Willancourt hastened to Versailles in search of succour and support, the wretched lads were deprived of every means of defence. The younger one, terror-struck, and throwing himself in tears at his accusers' feet, confessed to whatever they chose to put into his mouth. De la Barre, gifted with greater strength of mind, admitting trifling peccadilloes, vehemently protested his innocence of the graver charges. It may even be added that the noble fellow well knew who was the real culprit, but would not name him. An honourable magistrate, the oldest and the most intimate friend of one of the two co-accused, has stated that the veritable perpetrator of the mutilation was a hare-brained lad, —, who was frequently with De la Barre and his other companions. But the dastardly wretch, instead of leaving France and then avowing his culpability in the face of Europe, took

good care not to reveal his secret; whilst his heroic friend, firmly determined to betray no clue, was devoting, by his silence, his own head to the executioner. On the 28th of February, 1766, a horrible sentence was pronounced whose memory will ever weigh as a great crime, both on the tribunal which decreed it and the town where the victim was sacrificed.

And who were the judges? In the first place, Duval de Soicourt, whom we already know. Secondly, one Broustelles, whose principal profession was to deal in pigs and cattle, and who was utterly unfit for the office; seeing that he had sentences recorded against him, that he had been declared incapable of holding any municipal office in the kingdom, and that the advocates of Abbeville, by a formal deed, had refused to admit him into their body. The third judge, intimidated, it is said, by the other two, had the weakness to sign the sentence, and was afterwards tormented by poignant though ineffectual remorse. His act is the more inexcusable, from his having one day said, during the trial, "We ought not to torment the poor innocents in this way."

The Court of Abbeville was subordinate of the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris. Thither, consequently, De la Barre was transferred, and confined in the Montgomery tower. Eight of the most celebrated advocates in Paris signed a consultation, in which they demonstrated the illegality of the proceedings and the absurd barbarity of the three Abbeville judges, "who deserved," said Voltaire, "to be skinned alive on their fleur-de-lys-covered benches, and to have their skins used as a covering for the flowers." The attorney-general in vain gave his opinion that their execrable sentence should be quashed. It was confirmed on the 5th of June, 1766, by a majority of two votes. The real fact is, that De la Barre, whose cause was espoused by the "philosophers," was sacrificed as a sop thrown out to stop the mouths of the Jesuits, who, though suffering from a defeat, had still sufficient influence to excite wretched quarrels, and to make themselves dreaded as dangerous enemies.

It is related that the Bishop of Amiens, tormented by severe remorse, and bitterly deploring the consequences of his imprudent zeal, solicited the aid of clergy in order to obtain letters of grace. It is even added, that the parliament delayed the signing of the decree for six days, in the hope that Louis the Fifteenth would prove not inflexible. But the sultan of the Parcaux-Cerfs sanctioned the infamy of the condemnation.

De la Barre was brought to Abbeville by way of Rouen, a circuitous route, as if his persecutors feared a rescue. He entered the town by the Hocquet Gate, in a post-chaise, between two police officers, and escorted by archers disguised as couriers. At six in the morning of the first of August he was put to the rack in the presence of a justly respected medical man, M. Gatte, who saved him from a great part of the horrors of torture by telling the executioners

that further suffering would result in death. It is asserted that, during this cruel ordeal, the chevalier avowed himself guilty of the offence committed in Saint Catherine's cemetery. Immediately afterwards, he was visited in prison by a Dominican, Father Bosquier, whom he had several times met at his aunt's, the Abbess of Willancourt. He invited him to share his last repast; but the worthy friar could not eat.

"Why will you not dine?" De la Barre inquired. "You will require something to sustain you during the spectacle I am about to offer. Let us have some coffee," he added, after a quiet meal; "it will not prevent my sleeping."

A little before five in the afternoon, he was made to get into a tumbril, in his shirt, with a rope round his neck, uncovered and barefoot, with boards before and behind, inscribed IMPIOUS, BLASPHEMER, EXECRABLY AND ABOMINABLY SACRILEGIOUS. Father Bosquier held a crucifix before him. An executioner, in the same vehicle, held a lighted taper. Several mounted bailiffs and ten brigades of archers, some of whom had come seventeen leagues, surrounded the victim. A prodigious crowd, thronging in from the surrounding country, in spite of the rain, blocked up the streets, filled the windows, and scaled the roofs. "What has given me the greatest pain to-day," said the chevalier, during this terrible passage, "is to see at the windows so many people whom I believed my friends." But his emotion was still greater on observing a young woman whom he did not expect to meet on such an occasion. "She here!" he indignantly exclaimed, sorrowfully fixing his gaze upon her.

It has been recorded that De la Barre refused to make the amende honorable in front of the porch of Saint Vulfray's church; but an anonymous chronicler who noted down all the details of the execution, and who witnessed the horrible tragedy, states that the chevalier knelt on the first step of the portal, and pronounced the required words in a firm tone of voice. The executioners did not cut his tongue; they merely went through with the pantomime of doing so. Arrived at the market-place, De la Barre, after the reading of his sentence, mounted a vast scaffold without aid or effort, whilst the executioner hung on a gallows, planted a few paces off, a picture in which D'Étalonde, laden with chains and with his wrist amputated, was burning in effigy.

"Ah! poor fellow!" exclaimed the chevalier, as he glanced at the odious painting. Turning in another direction, he perceived an enormous heap of billet-wood intermingled with fagots and straw. "That, then, is my burial-place," he added, with heroic calmness. Addressing the executioners, he asked, "Which of you has to cut off my head?"

"I," said the Paris executioner.

"Are your weapons good? Let me see them."

"Monsieur, we never show them."

"Was it you who beheaded the Comte de Lally?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"You made him suffer long."

"It was his own fault; he was constantly in motion. Place yourself well, and I will not miss you."

"Never fear, I shall not be a child."

His confessor, who had never left him, exhorted him to repentance, and promised heaven. A slight smile then hovered on his lips. The priest presented a crucifix to kiss, and gave absolution. De la Barre, after kissing the Christ several times, knelt with his face to the butchery. The executioner took off the rope he wore round his neck as well as the shirt which had been put over his coat, cut off a part of his hair, tied his hands behind him, and bandaged his eyes. When ready to strike, he slightly raised the chin with his hand, poised his weapon several times, and at a single blow severed the head, which rebounded a foot from the scaffold. The trunk fell heavily back on the boards, and a fountain of blood poured from the veins. The instant the cutlass struck the victim, the crowd clapped their hands. "Not one of those who came to see the execution was touched, *for he showed too much hardihood*," is the record of the anonymous chronicler. They applauded again when the executioner seized the bloody head. He removed the bandage which covered the eyes, showed it to the people, and replaced it beside the body. A few minutes afterwards he stirred it with his foot, to make sure that life was completely extinct, whilst one of his assistants ascertained that the pulse had ceased to beat. They then let down with ropes the remains of the victim who had been sacrificed to such miserable passions, and placed them on the pile with the "Philosophical Dictionary" and several other works. They covered the books and the body with straw, and then set fire to the whole. During the night the executioners broke up the bones, and next day the ashes were carried away in a tumbril. The unconsumed wood and all the scaffolding, abandoned to the populace by the monks whose perquisite they were, were sold by auction. The money realised was spent "in drinking to the health of the defunct."

An advocate, who afterwards attained celebrity, M. Linguet, defended Moinsel, who was still in prison, and gloriously gained his cause, as well as that of two of the fugitives. Voltaire obtained for D'Étalonde, promotion in the Prussian army until his sentence was finally reversed. On the 25th Brumaire, year II., the Convention rehabilitated (i. e. reinstated to its rank in society) the memory of De la Barre. Long time after Duval de Soicourt's death, amongst his other papers, the documents relating to the chevalier's trial were found, and burnt, by a man of business, who boasted of his vandalism. But the facts were not to be so suppressed. They occurred, let it be again considered, not quite a hundred years ago. Civilisation has surely made some progress during

the interval. For can we conceive it possible that they should be repeated anywhere in Europe at the present day?

PINCHBACK'S AMUSEMENTS.

ENGLAND is scarcely "Merry England" now, or is it even asserted to be so, except in those pseudo-patriotic songs in which "The Oak," "Roast-beef," The Church," and "The Flag that's braved a thousand years," are the primary ingredients.

The work of Pinchback, the English labourer, is pretty well known: it consists of sheep-minding, sheep-washing, ploughing, hedging, sowing, thrashing, cart-driving, harrowing, planting, wood-cutting, and so forth. From dark to dark he lifts heavy weights, toils with all his might, groans between the plough tilts, wields the heavy axe; digs, hews, and hoes, through the long hours, and when night comes, what is his amusement? It might be almost any sort of amusement that whiles away the cares of the gentlefolks at the Hall. All his senses are clear and sound, and he has a good memory. He has the same craving for occasional diversion as the squire has: let us see what pleasurable occupation he finds for his hard-earned leisure hours.

The English labourer has only one place of amusement, and that is the beer-shop; the beer-shop is his club, his reading-room, his theatre, his music-hall, his evening party; it is his shelter from care in the summer, and his basking-place in winter.

Now, I do not praise his choice of the public-house, though I cannot altogether wonder at it. It may lead him into drinking, or at least into spending more money than he ought to spend. He sometimes meets bad characters there, and often hears what he had better not hear. His amusement there is selfish, for he must leave his wife and children pining at home. It also leads him into late hours, and into expense. But if the public-house were even a perfect school of virtue, it would not afford the right sort of healthy amusement for the English labourer. The landlord's only motive is to sell his liquor: chess, dominoes, anything that interferes with drinking, he detests and discountenances. If he has a bagatelle-table, it is only to bring men to the house, and to make them thirsty at petty gambling.

Those of our educated people who have not the right sympathy with the poor, simply because they do not understand them, lay too much stress on reading as an all-sufficing amusement for the virtuous labourer. They forget how little pleasure there is in stammering and spelling for half an hour over a single page of a book; they forget how sluggish and unelastic the brain becomes when the body that owns it has been twelve hours at hard labour. They forget that most amusing books are too high-flown for the labourer; and that their authors shoot over his head: also, that one cannot spend a whole life in reading over and over again, The

Pilgrim's Progress and Robinson Crusoe. As for the poets, even Shakespeare, they are all too grand for Pinchback. He does not "know where to have them." Grand poets do not understand his feelings or his wants. Moreover, and after all, even if our labourer could read easily, it is chiefly for winter amusement that he would resort to books.

Dramatic performances, even of the humblest kind, Pinchback has none, either to raise his admiration for virtue, or to increase his horror of guilt, except once a year at fair-time, when The Orphan of Samarcand and The Bleeding Nun delight and terrify him. As for music, he has only the two fiddles in church on Sunday, and the coarse songs that he hears whistled or shouted at the "Blue Dog" or the "Flying Sun" on week days. Without exaggeration, Giles Pinchback's life is a dull and melancholy one.

But as he is a poor doctor who only points out to you your disease and does not offer you a remedy, I will first show how much gayer and merrier the countryman's life was two hundred and even one hundred years ago, and then suggest some means of alleviating its present hopeless dreariness, its stupidity, and its lethargic monotony. I must premise, that I am not going to praise past times at the expense of the present. I am no lover of mediævalism, with its monkery, its cruelty, its feudality, and its grossness. I despise the doctrine of divine right, and I believe in the perfect equality of souls; but yet, there is no age in which I cannot find something to admire; no age which I do not discover to have been, in some respects wiser, though in some more foolish, than our own.

With all its faults, the Elizabethan age was a great and a happy one. There were fewer social jealousies then than now. Men's ranks were known at once by their dress and by their speech. There were more independent yeomen then than now; trade was less painfully competitive and feverishly intermittent; the love of money was not yet a national passion. Religion was less pretentious, more fervid and simple-hearted. But let me pass on to the subject of country happiness in the Elizabethan age.

In the first place, holidays were more numerous. The church-ale, the fair, the quarterly festival, all brought times of recreation for hope to look forward to as to green spots in a dusty barren life. Now, all these have been pared down, until a day at Whitsuntide is all that is left to the farmer's servant. Formerly old Pinchback had his romps on Plough-Monday, his football at Shrove-tide, his jovial harvest-home, his May-day dances, and his Christmas mummings. Education has done away with these sports, and the farmer has replaced these honest and hearty amusements with no others. No poor man in the world has fewer holidays than the English labourer of our times.

The unenclosed country, then gave a poor man an opportunity of occasionally improving his fare by a stray rabbit; not so, now. The poor man had then large commons—long since stolen away by the giant Riches—where he

could rear his maypole, play at quarter-staff, wrestle, run, or disport himself as he would. Nearly every village had its free playgrounds, where the old people sat, and the young made love, and where the youth who now poach or drink, passed happy hours at athletic games, that rendered them not only stronger, but more intelligent. Now, there is no opportunity for our villagers to meet together, to strengthen their mutual friendship and remove foolish prejudices.

But lest I should be thought to be repainting a mere conventional picture from Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, let me go on to prove that public amusements were common among the Elizabethan villagers.

That good old man, Roger Ascham, the tutor of Lady Jane Grey, tells us that village sports were much in practice in his time, to banish idleness and to harden the body for war. It is true that the increase of enclosures was already bringing archery gradually into desuetude, but it still continued a constant recreation amongst the poor. The growing use of the musket was also entrenching on the credit of the bow as a weapon, but it was still much used even in war. Henry the Eighth had passed a law requiring villagers to devote certain stated days to the use of the bow. The bow was cheap for the poor man, and he could make his own bow and his own arrows. These archery meetings were both useful and interesting. There, the wisest men of the village exercised a wholesome influence, both by example and by word of mouth. There, poor men sharpened their wits by competition, and learnt to cultivate their powers of observation. No man could have left the ground without being in some degree more fitted to take his part as a useful and intelligent workman. To a man with few subjects for thought, it was no bad mental exercise to have to consider whether his bow should be of Brazil-wood, elm, hazel, or ash; whether his string should be of hemp, silk, or flax; whether he would feather his arrows from the goose or the gander, the gosling or the fen-born bird; whether his arrows should have blunt, sharp, or silver-spoon heads. These meetings must have often brought landlord and men together, and have taught each his own position and his several duties. But countrymen scarcely ever meet now, except at the beer-shop, or coming home from work.

And now let us take a chronological leap to the Queen Anne times, of which the Spectator gives us so vivid a picture. And what do we find there? Social village gatherings, perhaps a little coarser than those just described, but still hearty, merry, and unfettered. There was wrestling on the green, boisterous cudgel play, running in sacks, and grinning through horse-collars;—not the most refined fun, I dare say, but still good-hearted and jovial, and a thousand times better than tavern-drinking, low gambling, and thievish poaching: which only make wife and children ragged and miserable, and eventually

drive the man into jail and the family into the workhouse.

But the remedy? The remedy is to a certain degree simple. Where there is no common, let a village have its free field, bought by subscription, and bought inalienably. In many large places, the poor and middle classes would soon collect money enough for such purposes by subscriptions. In other places, landlords with thirty and forty thousand a year would give the people a field, where cricket, single-stick, and football, could go on all the year round. Richer places might creep on until they built zinc sheds for tennis or bowls; and so the thing would progress.

For my own part, I could heartily wish to see the rifle movement progress among the agricultural poor; I should like to see whole regiments of mechanics in plain blouses and belts. But there are serious objections to this. In the first place, the average labourer of England is far too poor to be able to buy a five-pound rifle; and, in the second place, the great landed proprietor would too often do all he could to stop such a movement: believing that every agricultural rifleman must necessarily turn rebel-poacher and trespass on his preserves. I venture to contend, on behalf of Pinchback, that this is a mischievous delusion, and that the more he is trusted and encouraged, the less he will poach. Further, the use of the rifle would soon transform the English labourer into a far brighter fellow. He would grow keen, far-sighted, observant, light of foot, obedient, quick, and smart.

I fear that some of the clergy, with all good intentions, have done much harm in setting their faces against country fairs and social meetings. They have abolished them, when they ought only to have reformed them. Indifferent themselves to athletic pursuits, they have shut their eyes to the fact that such sports invigorate, harden, and develop the country labourer.

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